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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California



## THESIS

N445

POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT IN SOUTH AMERICA

by

Santiago R. Neville

June 1988

Thesis Advisor: Prof. Thomas Bruneau

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: Potential for Conflict in South America

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Between 1978 and 1983, a number of violent interstate confrontations in South America, including the Falklands/Malvinas War, indicated that the continent was experiencing a period of tension and instability, with a strong possibility of additional interstate war. Several South American nations were engaged in armamentism, were internally unstable, and displayed considerable animosity towards each other. Meanwhile, U.S. ability to play a constructive security role appeared greatly diminished.

This thesis examines conflict in South America from a historical and contemporary viewpoint, analyzing the factors which have led to wars in the past and may (or may not) do so in the future. Geopolitics, militarism, arms races and boundary disputes are discussed, as is the U.S. role in the region in the past and present; a perspective on a broadened U.S. military and policy option is included. The conclusion of the work is that interstate war is not likely in the foreseeable future, especially while democratic regimes remain in power.

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## I. INTRODUCTION: THE "UNEXPECTED" WAR: FALKLANDS - MALVINAS

The South Atlantic War<sup>1</sup> between Argentina and the United Kingdom in 1982 caught many by surprise--including the two participants. It appears that neither side had anticipated the actions or reactions of the other. The British withdrawal of forces from the area prior to invasion would not have taken place if the threat of invasion loomed; and, the Argentines seriously miscalculated not only Britain's willingness to defend the islands, but her capability to do so.<sup>2</sup>

The dispute went back to the Eighteenth century, when Spain and Britain had claimed the islands. After achieving independence, Argentina established a small settlement on the islands, which was destroyed by the crew of the American ship "Lexington" in 1832, in reprisal for the capture of American sealing vessels. In 1833, British naval forces took over the islands and expelled the remaining Argentine residents; the current British presence dates to that time. Argentina never recognized the legitimacy of British colonial claims, and repeatedly pressed its case in international fora.

In 1964, the issue was discussed in the UN Special Committee on Decolonization.<sup>3</sup> The UN urged negotiations on the basis of both decolonization and the interests of the

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<sup>1</sup> Also known as the "Falklands/Malvinas War" and the "Anglo-Argentine War."

<sup>2</sup> Dov S. Zakheim, "The South Atlantic Conflict: Strategic, Military, and Technological Lessons", in Alberto Coll and Anthony Arendt, eds., The Falklands War (Boston and London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), p. 160. See also Admiral (Ret.) Harry Train's "An Analysis of the Falklands/Malvinas Islands Campaign" in the Winter 1988 issue of the Naval War College Review. According to ADM Train, the Argentines never intended to go to war at all--witness the care taken to shed no British blood during the initial invasion operation.

<sup>3</sup> Jozef Goldblat and Victor Millan, The Falklands/Malvinas Conflict: A Spur to Arms Buildups, (Stockholm: SIPRI, 1983), p.5.



islands' inhabitants, and talks between the two countries began in 1966. Although a few minor agreements were reached (such as air travel to and from the mainland, petroleum supplies, and trade facilitation), no substantive conclusion could be reached on the sovereignty question. A shooting incident took place in the area in 1976 between an Argentine frigate and a British research vessel, but no serious consequences followed; talks between the two states continued. In 1980, the islanders were consulted by Her Majesty's Government regarding their future; they opted for a 25-year freeze on discussion of the question, rather than for Argentine sovereignty with a 99-year leaseback by the British.<sup>4</sup> Argentina announced that this was unacceptable; nevertheless, talks continued, with the last being held in New York in early 1982. A little over a month later, Argentine military forces landed at Port Stanley.<sup>5</sup>

The war was a costly affair for both sides. The financial cost to Argentina in expenditures and lost equipment is unofficially estimated at \$850 million, and casualties are estimated at around 500-750 dead and 800-1,000 injured. Official British casualty figures are 255 dead, and 777 injured; financial costs run into the billions of dollars and long-term defense expenditures continue to mount.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This is essentially the same type of interim solution which had apparently worked in the Antarctic; the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 (ratified by both Argentina and Britain, among others) merely put off all sovereignty claims without disputing their merit (Article IV).

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence S. Germain, "A Diary of the Falklands Conflict", in Bruce Watson & Peter Dunn, eds., *Military Lessons of the Falklands Islands War* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), p. 135. Germain contends that the Argentines landed a 100-man contingent led by Captain Alfredo Astiz on South Georgia on 26 March, and that this was the first military act of the war. Other sources (Train) indicate that reports of the Argentine landing on South Georgia were exaggerated, and the first military act was the actual invasion of the Falklands on 2 April.

<sup>6</sup> Goldblat and Millan, pages 18-23. See also "Britain Begins War Exercise to Try Out Falkland [sic] Airport," *New York Times*, 8 March 1988; Britain constructed a new tactical aircraft capable airfield at Port Stanley in the Falklands at

The unexpectedness and scope of the war generated much controversy about its causes and implications. Various reasons for the outbreak of the war have been advanced. These include anti-colonialism,<sup>7</sup> long-standing disputes over sovereignty rights, resource competition, militarism/armamentism and geopolitical yearnings, and attempts by both the Argentine and British governments to bolster popular support at home.<sup>8</sup> In addition, external factors such as mediation or an effective international system which could have helped to prevent the war or to negotiate peace were absent or failed.

Many of these reasons or preconditions can be found in other existing relationships among countries in the region, leaving open the possibility for intrahemispheric conflict in addition to Argentina's quarrel with an exohemispheric nation. The South Atlantic War has therefore been postulated by some analysts as a harbinger, if not an additional rationale or cause, for continued and widespread near-term armed conflict in South America.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, there

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a cost of over \$670 million. This figure did not include aircraft or upkeep expenses at such a remote location.

<sup>7</sup> Buenos Aires objected repeatedly to any solution which would not have resulted in Argentine sovereignty; in other words, the issue of British imposition of colonial control over the inhabitants was not an issue. Newsweek, 10 May 1982, p. 37. The Argentine stance was that the decolonization principle and the integrity of territorial sovereignty were superior to the self-determination principle. See Lowell S. Gustafson, "The Principle of Self-Determination and the Dispute About Sovereignty Over the Falkland Islands," Inter-American Economic Affairs, Volume 37 No. 4, Spring 1987. Pages 81-82.

<sup>8</sup> Alejandro Dabat and Luis Lorenzano, Argentina: The Malvinas and the End of Military Rule (Verso Editions: London, 1984), p. 186. In their doctrinaire Marxist-Leninist "analysis" of the conflict, the authors agree on its definition as "a conventional war between two bourgeois states to consolidate their unpopular democratic regimes." They also consider the possibility that it represents (on the part of Argentina) "a form of imperialist drive similar to that of Japan, Russia, and the U.S. before 1914."

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Augusto Varas' Militarization and the Arms Race in Latin America (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985). Varas states (p. 54) that "paradoxically, the relaxation of international tension [the Cold War] has given

are those who postulate that the war was an anomaly in a region with a long tradition of interstate peace, and that the possibility of further wars in the area is remote.<sup>10</sup>

In the past, especially since World War II, South America has not been a conflict-prone region relative to the rest of the world. Recent developments, including the South Atlantic War and continent-wide arms buildups since 1966, have led to concern over whether this trend might not be changing. Using a historical approach and a review of current literature, this paper will explore the various factors which could originate or contribute to conflict in an area of significance to U.S. interests, in an attempt to determine the current and projected risk for armed confrontation in South America.

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rise to new tensions... that may lead to conflict." Michael A. Morris and Victor Millan in Controlling Latin American Conflicts (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983) cite (pages 1 & 2) the Falklands/Malvinas War as an indicator that Latin America has become a "conflict-prone region." In the Introduction to Geopolitics and Conflict in South America (New York: Praeger, 1985), Jack Child notes (page 3) that "few informed optimists today... would predict that the South Atlantic War was an isolated event that could not be repeated in some other battlefield of the Western Hemisphere."

<sup>10</sup>David C. Gompert, Deputy Secretary of State for Political Affairs under Secretary of State Alexander Haig, calls the war "an aberrant blip on the radar scope of world affairs." (Coll and Arend, p. 107). For one of the best analyses of this viewpoint, see Walter Little's "International Conflict in Latin America" Journal of International Affairs, Volume 63 No. 4, Autumn 1987. On the Left, Dabat and Lorenzano believe that Argentina's defeat precluded an eventual clash between the Argentinian regional imperialists, aided by the Bolivian and Peruvian bourgeoisies, against Chile. They also foresaw, however, the specter of "a new repressive demagogic-nationalist movement fuelling the flames of fratricidal war on the continent," as well as an auspicious climate for the new regional powers "to exert diplomatic pressures on weaker countries" and an acceleration of the regional arms race.



## II. BACKGROUND TO CONFLICT IN SOUTH AMERICA: THE 19TH CENTURY

### A. THE COLONIAL AND POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIODS

Throughout its colonial history, South America was generally unmarred by interregional conflicts, chiefly due to its governmental and cultural homogeneity. Brazil's relative geographic isolation from her neighbors and the peaceful resolution of disagreements between higher levels of government in Spain and Portugal prevented any international wars.<sup>11</sup> Aside from periodic insurrections, the only cases of transnational conflict were spinoffs from the European wars, based on religious and political/economic disputes among the European powers rather than on any purely American interests.

The struggle for independence by the native-born inhabitants of Iberian America had its roots to a great extent in European trends and struggles; Napoleon's invasion of Spain and the replacement of the legitimate Spanish king by Napoleon's brother Joseph acted as catalysts for nationalist sentiment in the colonies.<sup>12</sup> The patriotic ideas themselves were a distillation of European revolutionary thought which had little to do either in theory or in application with then extant Latin American conditions.

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<sup>11</sup> The Treaty of Tordesillas, 1494, established a line of demarcation from a meridian running 100 leagues west of Cape Verde to between 48 and 49 degrees longitude as Portuguese territory, and land to the west of the line as Spanish soil. This was updated--very much in Portugal's favor--by the Treaty of Madrid (1750), which established two criteria: a) *uti possidetis* (last possessor) and b) natural boundaries (mountain peaks, the center of a river, etc.). Portugal thus obtained over twice the territory it had been granted at Tordesillas. The Treaty of Madrid was annulled in 1761, but its principles were incorporated into the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1777. Unfortunately, key provisions in the treaty for charting and mapping surveys were never carried out. For a full discussion of the treaties and their impact, see Gordon Ireland, *Boundaries, Possessions and Conflicts in South America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1938), page 325.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Calvert, *Boundary Disputes in Latin America*. (London: Institute for Study of Conflict, 1983), page 3.

The turbulent period which convulsed the Spanish Empire saw wars directed against the colonial power's agents in the New World rather than among any particular areas or local populations. In fact, this period was characterized by grand schemes of multi-regional unity, such as Bolivar's plans for a Gran Colombia encompassing present-day Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador. The plans failed after independence had been achieved, as it became evident that each area of the defunct Empire felt imbued with its own distinct national character--or when one particular region saw its interests better served by having many weaker neighbors rather than a single strong one.<sup>13</sup>

Brazil was a significant exception to this process. Portugal was less a military-autocratic state than Spain, and Brazil was settled rather than conquered (the aborigines were few in number and were not culturally advanced); independence came in a relatively bloodless manner, with the heir to Portugal's Braganza throne declaring himself the ruler.<sup>14</sup> The military were relatively unimportant during the first forty years of the Empire.

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<sup>13</sup> This was best demonstrated by Chile's persistent--and successful--efforts to separate Upper from Lower Peru by destroying the Peruvian-Bolivian Confederation. The resulting nations (modern Peru and Bolivia) thus broke ties which had bound them to each other culturally and geographically since the Inca Empire. See John Edwin Fagg's Latin America: A General History (New York: Macmillan, 1963), pages 566-7.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Wesson, ed., The Latin American Military Institution (New York: Praeger, 1986), page xii.

## B. NINETEENTH CENTURY CONFLICTS

Following independence, major wars<sup>15</sup> occurred only sporadically; the greatest in terms of economic effects and enduring bitterness were the War of the Triple Alliance between Paraguay on one side, and Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay on the other; and the War of the Pacific, pitting Chile against Peru and Bolivia. Lesser confrontations also took place between Peru and Ecuador, the short-lived Peruvian-Bolivian Confederation and Chile, Brazil and Argentina (over Uruguay) and among European and South American nations.

### 1. The War of the Triple Alliance (1864-1870)

The bloodiest war in post-colonial South America was initiated principally by the colossal ambitions of Francisco Solano López, Paraguay's colorful and bloodthirsty dictator.<sup>16</sup> He used Brazilian intervention in one of Uruguay's frequent factional squabbles as a pretext to declare war on Brazil in 1865 after the empire refused his ultimatum to withdraw from Uruguay. The Paraguayan dictator proposed to send an army into Uruguay and then invade Southern Brazil, but this meant marching through Argentina;

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<sup>15</sup> The definitions of the terms "war" and "regional conflict" vary, with at least one author, Quincy Wright, claiming that war is a military confrontation that includes a declaration of war and the involvement of fifty thousand persons; given the scope and size of South American militaries, governments and populations, such a definition would barely encompass the Anglo-Argentine Conflict. It would also fail to include the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, which after all were undeclared. For the purposes of this paper, a better working definition (proposed by CDR Michael McCune, USN in a February 1988 lecture at the Naval Post-Graduate School, Monterey) is that at a minimum it involves direct military confrontation between two separate recognized nation states, and one thousand casualties. Thus, civil "wars" and other forms of internal violence will not be treated here except as they affect transnational conflict.

<sup>16</sup> Ever the revisionist, E. Bradford Burns claims in his Latin America: A Concise Interpretive History (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982), page 111, that the war was a result of Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil joining forces because they felt "alarmed by Paraguay's national development," which comparatively outstripped their own and threatened the balance of power in the Plata basin. Burns apparently considers aggression a manifestation of national development.



when Argentina denied him passage, López declared war on that state as well.

While on the surface López' actions seem suicidal, they were not entirely unfounded; while López had the largest standing army in South America, the Brazilian Empire "was so disjointed López had reason to believe it could never put an effective army in the field."<sup>17</sup> Uruguay was riven by factional disputes; Argentina had no love for Brazil, and also had a history of factional strife and disunity. Through poor leadership on López' part and the sheer weight of numbers on the allied side, the war turned against the Paraguayans and eventually ended up in the near extermination of Paraguay's population by the time the war ended in 1870.

Burns points out the results of the conflict: first, it opened the Plata River network to international commerce and travel, an important factor for Brazil. It also established the identity of Uruguay and a vastly weakened Paraguay as permanent buffer states between the two larger countries; neither Brazil nor Argentina intervened in the two smaller nations again. Although these may not have been the motivating factors behind the war, they give it a geopolitical significance that cannot be overlooked. Another result was the huge increase in the Argentine and Brazilian military, followed by creation of large standing armies in the two giants of South America, which previously only had token national forces.

## 2. The War of the Pacific (1879-1884)

This war saw several innovations for the continent, not least among them a prolonged naval phase and a well-orchestrated amphibious campaign. The participants were Peru and Bolivia, allied against Chile. The cause of the war was a dispute over exploitation of nitrate deposits by Chilean and European entrepreneurs in an area claimed by Bolivia. When Bolivia increased taxes on the nitrates as a

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<sup>17</sup> Fagg, pages 584-586.

preliminary step toward nationalization of the deposits, Chile sent a military force to occupy the Bolivian port of Antofagasta. Popular outcry in Peru, coupled with a "secret" treaty signed in 1873 which obligated Peru to come to Bolivia's defense, led to declarations of war.

After several engagements, Chile won control of the seas and proceeded in a series of landings up the coast to defeat the allied armies. Mediation efforts by the United States were unsuccessful, since Peru and Bolivia refused to give up claim to any territory Chile had "conquered." The Chileans captured Lima in 1881, and by 1884 extracted a peace on their terms. Bitterness over the war and its consequences remains a problem in relations among the three states.<sup>18</sup> As in the War of the Triple Alliance, this conflict also saw an enormous increase in the regular armies of the belligerents, to a degree that would have been unthinkable prior to the war.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. Other Wars

There were several less notable wars and confrontations on the continent during the Nineteenth century. They included the wars of the Peruvian-Bolivian Confederation (1826-1839); although fought chiefly by Peruvian and Bolivian factions, this series of conflicts was largely decided by Chilean intervention to prevent the

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<sup>18</sup> The consequences can be summarized as: 1) The loss of Bolivia's access to the sea; 2) Peru's military humiliation and loss of territory; 3) reinforcing Chile's hubris and aggressiveness. Wesson (page 145) states that as a result of her victorious wars, an important part of Chile's military doctrine is "a militant nationalism that emphasizes the possibility of armed conflict with neighboring countries... and the use of diplomatic and military means to prevent a hostile combination of neighboring countries."

<sup>19</sup> The Chilean prewar army amounted to some 2,500 officers and men, principally devoted to internal security and Indian wars. By war's end, Chile had an army of 45,000. The large and well-equipped army was retained and turned against the Araucanian Indians after the war, expeditiously terminating a "problem" which had plagued Spanish and Chilean administrations for 330 years. Peruvian-Bolivian revanchism and the Argentine "threat" kept subsequent governments from reducing the size of the armed forces. See Andrea T. Merrill, ed., Chile: A Country Study (Washington D.C.: American University, 1982), p. 195.



formation of a coalition among neighboring states, which could potentially isolate Chile or threaten her security. The series of petty wars between Brazil and Argentina from 1825 to 1828 over the area that eventually became Uruguay can be characterized as post-independence consolidation rather than as major war between two organized states.

Another conflict took place in 1860 between Peru and Ecuador, based principally on conflicting boundary claims in Amazonian jungle territories. Peru won the war handily, but the issue remains unresolved (from the Ecuadorian perspective) to this day.

Last but not least, there were several instances of intervention by extracontinental forces, including the United States and Spain, France, and Great Britain. In addition to the Falklands/Malvinas occupation, the British expressed dissatisfaction with the treatment of their nationals or interests on a number of occasions, especially with the more xenophobic regimes (such as Argentina's Rosas, who ruled 1829-1852; the French and British fleets blockaded Buenos Aires in 1838-40 and 1845-48). Spain seized the Peruvian guano-producing Chincha Islands in 1864, and bombarded Callao and Valparaíso in 1866. The United States sent a debt-collection naval expedition to Paraguay in 1859.<sup>20</sup>

#### C. CAUSES OF WAR IN THE 19TH CENTURY

A number of variables have been cited by different authors to explain the causes underlying international conflict in general and in Nineteenth century South America in particular, among them boundary disputes; the preponderance of the military in most of the nations' governments; national aggrandizement; national security; and economics. Overall, however, one of the salient characteristics of these conflicts is their relative

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<sup>20</sup> Pelham Horton Box, The Origins of the Paraguayan War. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1930 /reissued 1967), p. 35.

scarcity. It is therefore difficult to make generalizations or to pinpoint any single factor as the principal causal agent for the wars; rather, the various conflicts could be attributed to a number of circumstances. The most promising avenue of approach is an examination of individual variables to determine if they apply only to a specific time and place, or if they can be considered valid in several cases.

#### 1. Boundary Disputes

Spanish colonial administration encompassed a number of contradictory or overlapping boundaries; thus borders based on colonial boundaries were difficult to determine with any conclusiveness. In 1848, the principal South American nations agreed at the Congress of Lima to use the Spanish boundaries extant in 1810 as the basis for delimitation; however, by 1848, many of the colonial borders had already been changed by force or circumstance. The agreement to abide by the colonial boundaries merely served to provide various states with conflicting claims.<sup>21</sup>

Brazil was in an even more tenuous situation regarding its boundaries; much of its territory was undetermined due to the ambiguities in the Treaty of San Ildefonso. Accordingly, the Brazilians used a different argument, that of actual and historical occupation, as the rationale for their borders. This was apparently a valid criterion in international law of the time, which still recognized right of conquest and the need to occupy a territory in order to claim it.<sup>22</sup>

Some of the boundary disputes which were based on colonially-determined borders were settled peacefully, through arbitration or negotiation. This was particularly the case with regard to Brazil; largely through the diplomatic skills of the Baron of Rio Branco, Brazil was able to extract concessions and gain title to huge tracts of land

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<sup>21</sup> Calvert, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Calvert, p. 5.

at the expense of almost all Brazil's neighbors. This was remarkable given the economic significance of much of the territory in question during the rubber boom late in the century.

For the most part, however, boundary disputes remained an unresolved issue which at times exacerbated tensions among countries. They were occasionally resurrected to serve some immediate internal purpose. The only case where irredentist claims by themselves were the principal cause of a war was the clash between Peru and Ecuador in 1859; even then, economics and national pride were contributing factors.

## 2. Militarism and Armed Conflict

Another cause cited for wars in Latin America is the nature of the region's military forces and leadership, and their participation in government.<sup>23</sup> There seems to be little validity to this argument, however, since there were so few wars in spite of the predominance of military regimes in the region in the Nineteenth Century. If anything, this factor might have prevented external conflict due to the considerable internal turmoil which it generated. The lack of military professionalism (with the attendant power struggles among the various leaders), small size of the armies, poor transportation and logistics infrastructure, rugged terrain and relatively large national areas made cross-border conflict a daunting prospect for any military regime, especially when coupled with political uncertainty at home.

Armamentism and military buildups may have played a role in the conflicts when tied in with other factors; the same can be said for perceptions of weakness generating a failure in deterrence. Peru's enlightened despot Ramon

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<sup>23</sup>Alexandre da Souza Costa Barros, "Regional Rivalries and War Probabilities in South America." Paper presented at the 1980 Conference of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (Chicago:23-25 Oct, 1980).

Castilla had built up and professionalized his military forces when he went to war with Ecuador in 1860. Conversely, Peru's "secret" treaty of 1873 with Bolivia occurred at a time when the nation's first civilian president, Manuel Pardo, was in the process of dismantling much of Peru's not inconsiderable military capability. By 1878-79, when the casus belli took place in Atacama, Peru was in no position to wage a successful war against Chile, and her ally Bolivia was even more militarily weak and backwards.<sup>24</sup> Chile, on the other hand, had a capable and well-equipped military. Francisco Lopez also believed he had overwhelming military power before initiating the War of the Triple Alliance.

While the small number of wars that took place makes it difficult to establish military capability and arms purchases as causal factors, both were apparently characteristic of the various states that started wars through aggressive behavior in the period. Conversely, a case could be made for the opposite, with military power serving as a deterrent; then as now, aggressive acts by various countries may have been forestalled by fear that such acts could result in a lost war against a powerful armed force. The key factor here would be the balance of power among the key regional players, rather than any individual buildup.

### 3. Economic/Resource Conflict<sup>25</sup>

The outstanding example of a conflict motivated by the desire to control economic resources is the War of the Pacific (1879-1884). Chile, in collusion with British interests, was able to gain control of the Atacama nitrate fields in Bolivia and Peru. To a lesser extent, the War of

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<sup>24</sup> For all his posturing, Bolivian Dictator Hilarión Daza also proved to be a craven poltroon. This facet of his character may have stirred the Chileans to carry out the initial aggression and carry on with the war.

<sup>25</sup> Marxist analysis views most human activity as economically motivated, and would undoubtedly ascribe class conflict as the root for all wars in the region. A broader perspective is explored in this paper.



the Triple Alliance was also fought over resources (access to the Plata waterways, ripuarian territory), and ended with large areas being transferred to the victors for economic exploitation.

Intervention by Brazil and Argentina in the "Cisplatine Province"/Banda Oriental (Uruguay) was outwardly motivated by competition for resources (land for livestock-raising), but ended after British mediation with both sides agreeing that neither would get the advantage--a unique case of mutually agreed upon denial rather than acquisition of resources. The root of the conflict was more likely traditional Luso-Spanish rivalry in the Plata estuary (making it a case of national aggrandizement or security), and not simply competition over a resource.<sup>26</sup>

Economics can be envisioned as playing a certain role in determining when a country became an aggressor; Peru, Paraguay and Chile were experiencing relative economic prosperity in 1859, 1860 and 1879 respectively, when they initiated military actions against neighboring states and/or their allies. There were no major wars started by desperately poor countries seeking to gain advantage by plundering a richer neighbor.

#### 4. Ideological Conflict

The common origins of the various Hispanic republics under the revolutionary ideology of independence (the "bolivarian ideal") from Spain initially provided a unifying character to the ideologies of South American states. Although most governments in the region failed to live up to the lofty ideals of the Liberators (indeed, many of the participants in the wars for independence later betrayed those ideals through power struggles and oppressive rule), there were no conflicts motivated by a clash of opposing

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<sup>26</sup> The agreement was not favorably received in either Brazil or Argentina; it was a direct cause for the fall of Rivadavia in the latter, and increased dom Pedro I's unpopularity in the former.

ideologies. Although Brazil was a monarchy surrounded by republics, her system of government was not an issue in the War of the Triple Alliance or in the wars over Uruguay. Ideological conflict over religion was avoided by the Catholic homogeneity provided by the colonial power.<sup>27</sup>

Economic systems of the time were too similar--or too underdeveloped-- to provoke hostilities based on ideological differences; Gaspar Rodríguez Francia's (ruled 1814-1840) totalitarian system in Paraguay, followed up in a less severe manner by the two Lopezes,<sup>28</sup> was not in itself the reason for the war which destroyed it. Its success, which enabled Francisco Solano López to become a threat to his neighbors, created the preconditions for the war, but the system was not the root cause.

#### 5. Absence of Conflict Preventing or Controlling Mechanisms and Institutions

Unlike Europe, which saw both formal and informal organizations such as the Holy Alliance designed to prevent war, no international mechanism existed in South America to prevent, control, or mediate war. Various attempts at creating such mechanisms were made, starting with the Treaty of Perpetual Union, League and Confederation proposed by the Pan American Conference of 1826,<sup>(29)</sup> which was never

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<sup>27</sup> The sertanejos' revolt in Brazil's Nordeste was surely an ideological conflict, but nevertheless an internal matter. The classic narration of this event is Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões* (Rebellion in the Backlands), with a novelized update by Mario Vargas Llosa in *La guerra del fin del mundo* (The War of the End of the World --- Madrid, Editorial Seix Barral, 1981).

<sup>28</sup> Carlos Antonio López, "an obese man with a pig-like face and a limp" (Fagg, page 583), ruled from 1841 until his death in 1862; he was then succeeded by the vice-president, his son Francisco Solano, whose disastrous rule ended with his death in battle in 1870.

<sup>29</sup> Attended by Gran Colombia (now composed of Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela), Central America (now Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala), Mexico, and Peru. The United States appointed delegates but could not attend.

ratified. The Congresses of Lima in 1848<sup>(30)</sup> and 1865,<sup>(31)</sup> and the Santiago Conference of 1856<sup>(32)</sup> similarly put forth procedures to control conflict among states, but the treaties they proposed were also never ratified. The principal means of conflict prevention remained bilateral diplomacy and third-party mediation.

Several European states (chiefly Great Britain), the Church (after the Vatican eased its stance on the republics in the 1830's), and the United States exerted some degree of influence on disputes during the period. In some cases (such as the War of the Pacific and the War of the Triple Alliance), however, European capitalist interests actually aided or stimulated one side to further their own gains. Because of actual or perceived conflicts of interest--and because they were in effect impossible to enforce--mediation decisions were frequently disregarded by the side which saw itself as the loser. Nevertheless, mediation provided a convenient lull in disputes which at least provided a breathing space for those involved.

The rubber boom of the late Nineteenth Century poses an interesting case of successful conflict control. The remoteness of the Amazonian jungle, with extremely hostile terrain and tenuous boundary claims on all sides, helps to explain the absence of armed conflict. Another mitigating factor was the skill of Brazil's diplomatic negotiator Rio Branco, who extracted concessions from almost all Brazil's

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<sup>30</sup> Attended by Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

<sup>31</sup> In attendance were representatives from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Venezuela, and Peru. The meeting was held to discuss the increased threat to the territorial integrity of the states from Europe. Mexico and the United States could not attend due to internal wars.

<sup>32</sup> Attended by Chile, Ecuador, and Peru. The Continental Treaty of Alliance and Reciprocal Assistance was signed; within three years, Peru and Ecuador went to war.

neighbors.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Brazil's geographic advantage, with the Amazon providing access while the Andes hindered her neighbors, contributed to peaceful resolution of the situation; the other nations were simply unable to generate a credible force vis a vis the Brazilians.

#### 6. War and Extracontinental Intervention

Largely through the intervention of Great Britain and the continuing decline of Spanish and Portuguese power projection capabilities, the former Iberian colonies were spared any major reinvasion efforts. There were some incidents (1864-1866) between the Spanish fleet and Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Argentina, including the bombardment of Callao harbor and Valparaiso; however, the intent of the Spanish expedition was punitive rather than invasive. Spain did not recognize many of her former colonies until well into the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup>

The U.S. naval expedition to Paraguay and the British and French blockades of Argentina and squabbles with several regimes were symptomatic of the instability, disorganization, and weakness of those governments. This style of gunboat diplomacy, however, has not been forgotten; its implication was that the state against which it is directed cannot be taken seriously or is incapable of being with dealt with as an equal.

Although none of these incidents really meet the criteria of a war, they were significant in their effect on the Latin psyche vis-a-vis foreign intervention. They colored Latin perceptions of the Monroe Doctrine and Britain's aid against Spanish and Portuguese recolonization; these are often viewed as self-serving policies which enabled

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<sup>33</sup> Thereby enlarging Brazil by as much as 250,000 square miles, according to Burns.

<sup>34</sup> Spain recognized Mexico in 1836; relations with the other states were gradually established throughout the course of the century (Honduras was last in 1894). See Burns, page 93.



the Anglo-Saxon states to exploit South America, rather than as altruistic moves to support Latin American independence.

European nations also intervened in some of the wars; Britain's role in the struggle for independence was scarcely concealed. Later, British ships ferried Uruguayans across the Plata estuary in 1830 to declare a new state, independent from Brazil. The British lent key logistics support to the Triple Alliance against Paraguay. Peruvian tradition holds that a French squadron prevented the bombardment of Lima by Chilean naval units during the War of the Pacific.

A more insidious form of intervention was that of arms sales and military training. The low technological level in South America after independence precluded an indigenous arms manufacturing capability for most of the century; even after industrialization, it was still limited to small arms at best. European and North American arms merchants supplied various regimes and factions with substantial equipment, including ships and field artillery. European decisions to sell or not to sell could determine the outcome of a possible war; Britain and Germany kept Chile well supplied during the War of the Pacific,<sup>35</sup> and the Triple Alliance counted on British support.

By the end of the century, almost all the littoral states had extensive foreign military and naval training missions, from Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain or the United States.

#### D. CONCLUSIONS

There does not seem to be any distinct correlation which ties together all the wars in South America during the Nineteenth Century, except that the aggressor initially

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<sup>35</sup> Peru's feckless President Mariano I. Prado (hero of the 1866 war against Spain) went in mid-1879 to the United States, where he initiated arms purchase arrangements. Claiming that Chilean command of the sea precluded his return and the shipment of the arms to Peru, he stayed abroad and Peru did not get the weapons. Rumors persist that he absconded with the funds.

believed he could win the war, and was going through a period of economic growth. No uniform political, social or economic factors can be found in the various wars.

Chile, aggressor and victor in the War of the Pacific, had a heterogeneous population with a large proportion of immigrants, was led by a civilian government and was undergoing a period of prosperity and stability rather than any internal economic or political turmoil. Lopez' dreams of conquest were nurtured and enabled by one of the most tightly controlled and ethnically homogeneous states in South America; the larger neighbors would not have picked a quarrel with him voluntarily, and did not do so with any of their neighbors for the rest of the century despite internal troubles of their own. Traditional antagonism between Argentines and Brazilians based on cultural differences and opposite conceptions of manifest destiny did not prevent the two sides from banding together in wartime; yet Peru and Chile went to war with each other only a decade after fighting as allies against Spain in the mid-1860's.

There was no such thing as a "typical" war which can be used as a benchmark for judging the rest. The minor war between Peru and Ecuador can be considered as the most predictable, simply because of the constant aggravation provided by boundary disputes. It contains all the elements one would expect: traditional antagonism, military rulers seeking popularity, a boundary dispute, preponderant force and an easy victory for one side. Nevertheless, it is essentially the only conflict of its kind after the turbulent post-independence era. Similar differences existed among numerous states in the area, but failed to erupt into full-scale war. The same has held true to the present day; while persistent disagreements constitute an irritant in relations among states, they have produced only a very small number of actual armed confrontations, and with very few exceptions

these have been controlled before they escalated and war was declared.

### III. FACTORS IN SOUTH AMERICAN REGIONAL CONFLICT, 1900-1967

#### A. THE TURN OF THE CENTURY: MILITARY PROFESSIONALIZATION

##### 1. Economic and Social Changes

South America experienced a great deal of change and progress around the turn of the century as nations in the region modernized and consolidated. This process, which was reflected in military as well as socioeconomic institutions, was largely related to the economic expansion of the industrialized countries of Europe and North America, and was largely guided and directed by extracontinental political and economic forces and ideas. The principal role of the South American nations in that expansion was not as equal partners in development, however, but as suppliers of raw materials and as markets for the finished goods manufactured by the industrial nations.<sup>36</sup>

The region also provided a safety valve for an overcrowded Europe, and several South American countries (chiefly the ABC nations--Argentina, Brazil, and Chile) received an enormous flow of immigrants during the period. Because of these economic and demographic ties, as well as due to admiration and envy for European culture and wealth, South America's governing elites aped the Europeans in manners, mores, and style wherever they could.

This integration of Latin America into the world economy necessitated a change in the structure and orientation of society. The scale of the new national economies required new skills, greater organization and efficiency, and a sizable infrastructure. A new middle class

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<sup>36</sup> The South American nations for the most part lacked the economic and technical infrastructure to match the Europeans, although Brazil, Argentina, and Chile tried to do so and succeeded to some extent.



and a proletariat appeared, with unceasing demands on the established elite for a greater share in power. New avenues for social and economic advancement appeared, and rising urban commercial wealth competed with and even replaced the traditional upper class of landed aristocrats.

The philosophy of nationhood was also affected by the demographic and economic changes. Nationalism emerged as a potent political force, driven in no small part by competition for resources to support growing populations and economies.<sup>37</sup>

Changes in the military reflected the changes in the state; from being a motley group of factions owned by or subservient to a particular popular leader ("caudillo") who offered them the spoils of power,<sup>38</sup> the military gradually became regularized along European lines, employing techniques and organizational structures similar to those of European armies. This was due principally to a conscious effort by the various governments, military as well as civilian, to bring about such a change as the states became more organized and the era of the caudillos receded.<sup>39</sup>

The identification of the military leadership with the economic elite increased in this period. Motives for military reform and reorganization varied from country to country, ranging from nationalism and irredentism (Peru), to a desire for increased political stability (Venezuela), to a need for external security and safeguarding conquests (Chile). In most of the states, regardless of other

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<sup>37</sup> Burns (op. cit, p. 180) defines nationalism as "a group consciousness that attributes great value to the nation-state, to which total loyalty is pledged." This general description can be applied to the early stages of military nationalism during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The ethnocentric, anti-European and anti-North American cultural nationalism which also developed at the time, though it influenced politics superficially, was not a major factor among the South American military elite until the 1930's.

<sup>38</sup> Wesson, page x.

<sup>39</sup> John J. Johnson, The Military and Society in Latin America (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 62.

missions, the military became synonymous with the maintenance of order.

Politically ambitious military leaders recognized the value of a more cohesive institution; because of historical roles in forging the nation during the independence struggle and defending national territory and honor in the wars of the Nineteenth century, the armed forces were often looked upon as embodying the nation and protecting national sovereignty, becoming a powerful symbol and rallying point. This was especially true given the weak, divided, corrupt and ineffective political and bureaucratic structures of the period, which often were unable to keep up with the demands of the modernizing states. The military frequently represented the only stable, disciplined, permanent institution in the country; this identification with national symbols, with order, and with efficiency gave the armed forces of several countries some legitimacy as rulers in their own right rather than as mere instruments of the state.

## 2. European Military Missions

One of the principal methods for bringing about modernization of the armed forces was the foreign military training mission.<sup>40</sup> Table I shows the date of arrival and nationality of the training missions in the various countries which received them.

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<sup>40</sup> Varas (1985, page 3) that professionalization was to a great extent a result of pressure by various rival European imperial powers competing for control of the New World following the decline of British imperial domination. He then goes on to state, however, that in accepting the missions the various South American armed forces acquired higher prestige and some became "a national force, a true expression of society." It would thus appear that the relationship with the Europeans was a form of symbiosis rather than a unilateral imposition.

TABLE I  
EUROPEAN ADVISORY MISSIONS TO SOUTH AMERICA

Country	Year	Nationality
Argentina	1899	German
Bolivia	1905	French
	1911	German
Brazil	1900	Sent Personnel to Germany
	1919	French
Chile	1886	German
Colombia	1895	French (unsuccessful)
	1907	German-trained Chileans
Ecuador	1890's	French
Peru	1896	French
Venezuela	1910	German-trained Chileans

Sources: Robert Wesson, The Latin American Military Institution, 1986; Fifer, Bolivia, 1972.

As can be seen, German influence predominated in several countries. The Chilean armed forces' aptitude for learning from their German instructors made them teachers in their own right. The German influence is present to this day, with many of the South American militaries still marching in goose step and wearing German-style helmets. Germany's military reputation was an important selling point; Argentina briefly considered British training teams, but decided on Germany due to Britain's poor performance in the Boer War.<sup>41</sup>

The character of national grievance may also have played a part in selecting the nationality of the training mission; Peru had never given up hope of recovering the lost territories of Tacna and Arica, referred to as the "Alsace-Lorraine" of South America,<sup>42</sup> and the Peruvians chose as their advisors the army of a nation with similar irredentist-revanchist views.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Wesson, p. 97. Nevertheless, a British naval training mission was retained in 1902. Argentina's choice of German instructors is of special interest since the Chilean reorganization, which had been guided by the Germans, was one of the main reasons that Argentina decided on military reorganization of its own.

<sup>42</sup> David P. Werlich, Peru: A Short History (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1978), p. 169.

<sup>43</sup> That the French also happened to be historical antagonists of the country advising Chile (Germany) was probably not coincidental. Another reason may have been

The major physical consequences of military reorganization, closely reflecting the greater efficiency of the state, past wars, mutual antagonisms, and greater buying power, included sudden and drastic increases in the size of standing armies through national conscription, and the buildup of large arsenals in an arms race that became continent-wide before long.<sup>44</sup> The influx of European instructors could have directed the army away from political participation as was the case in Europe; this was not the case. Chile's principal advisor, Lieutenant-Colonel (later General) Korner, used his influence with the military to provide critical support to a rebellion in 1891.<sup>45</sup>

### 3. The North American Influence

Even as European influence crested in the years before the First world War, the United States began to exert its strength in hemispheric affairs. While the U.S. in the Nineteenth Century had generally been restricted to commercial and political penetration on a scale similar to or less than Great Britain, the "colossus of the north" inexorably began to play a greater role in South America. One of the first and most significant acts of the century was the separation of Panama from Colombia, which made the latter country implacably hostile to the U.S. for three decades and worried many of the other nations about North American intentions.

The reception accorded to North American overtures by the South American nations depended on both the country and

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gratitude for the French role in preventing Chilean bombardment of Lima in 1881.

<sup>44</sup> Theresa Clair Smith's "Arms Race Instability and War" (Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 24 No. 2, June 1980; p. 255) provides a succinct definition of an arms race: "The participation of two or more nation-states in apparently competitive or interactive increases in quantity or quality of war material and/or persons under arms." For the purposes of her analysis, Smith added that the duration of the race was at least four years, and ended when the involved countries declared war.

<sup>45</sup> Merrill, p. 196.



the regime of the moment. Argentina generally perceived the U.S. as a competitor for regional hegemony. Peruvian President Augusto B. Leguía was an eager supporter of U.S. interests; other Peruvian leaders proved less enthusiastic.

While the United States had supplied small arms to South American nations since the mid-Nineteenth Century, it was not until the Taft administration, around 1910, that the U.S. began competing for naval sales in Latin America.<sup>46</sup> Taft apparently saw the sales as a good opportunity to aid U.S. business. This policy came to fruition in 1914, when Argentina--then engaged in a naval race with Brazil--received two battleships from the U.S.<sup>47</sup>

During World War I Britain and France, and eventually the U.S., exerted strong pressure on South America to turn against Germany. By war's end in 1918, eight South American countries had declared war on the Central Powers and four others had broken relations with Germany (chiefly over anti-shipping warfare policies), distancing them from their erstwhile mentors. The departure of the European missions and the inability or unwillingness of the warring nations to provide equipment and ordnance which they needed to fight World War I created an opportunity for the U.S. to expand its relations with Latin American militaries.

Although French and eventually German military missions to South America were renewed after the war,<sup>48</sup> the economic and political decline of the European powers immediately after the war also increased the relative strength of the U.S. in the hemisphere, with North American influence and trade replacing or competing with European ties in many countries. North American military missions arrived

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<sup>46</sup> Wesson (p. 96.); the author notes that the Great White Fleet had previously called at various South American ports.

<sup>47</sup> At the same time, the U.S. provided advisors to Brazil's Naval War College. Wesson, p. 97.

<sup>48</sup> Brazil received a French mission in 1919; in the mid-1930s, it was replaced by a German mission. Wesson, p. 90.

in several countries for the first time shortly after the war.<sup>49</sup>

## B. CONFLICT IN SOUTH AMERICA 1900-1945

### 1. The Postwar Situation

The South American republics experienced a tremendous economic boom in some commodities during World War I, as prices skyrocketed. Other sectors of the economy collapsed, however, as some markets were cut off. This boom-bust period was followed by an overall recession at the end of the war, with a shattered Europe unable to sustain the prewar economy. Soon thereafter, however, most of the continent (though not Brazil) enjoyed a degree of economic recovery as the Western economies "returned to normalcy," a development largely predicated on the growth of the North American market. When that collapsed in 1929, South America entered a period of severe economic depression accompanied by political turmoil.

Once the world economy stabilized, South America in the Twenties underwent a period of unprecedented economic prosperity. Nevertheless, almost all the nations underwent acute social and political crises brought on by the ever-increasing demands of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, fueled by ideological revolutionary thought of both European and local origin. In Chile, the military actually forced the government to meet many popular demands and effect reforms. Brazil witnessed a number of anarchic, fascistic, and communist movements, some with participation by military elements. In Peru, despite an autocratic civilian dictatorship, left-wing radical political thought and action flourished. In all the countries, the groundwork was laid for the major political changes that accompanied the economic collapse of 1929.

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<sup>49</sup> The first U.S. mission to Peru arrived in 1922 to advise the Navy. By the 1930s, North American officers were deciding personnel and acquisition policies for the Peruvian Navy. See Adrian J. English's Armed Forces of Latin America (London: Jane's Publishing, 1984), p. 377.

## 2. Economic Collapse, Political Upheaval

The Depression deeply affected every country in South America; those which had seemed most stable were not immune from the shock. The 11-year regime of Augusto B. Leguía in Peru was overthrown within months; Argentina's prosperity and civilian rule ended almost simultaneously; Chile went through a brief period of anarchy; Brazil's First Republic (1891-1930) collapsed economically and politically, ushering in Getulio Vargas' fifteen-year rule. In almost every nation on the continent, the military took a hand in politics, whether to restore order or to bring about change.

The military men who took over in the wake of the Depression were of a different cast from the Europeanists of the turn of the century. They were predominantly drawn from the middle and lower middle classes, and had a much more developed group consciousness than their "caudillista" predecessors. They also had an image of the military as the embodiment of the national spirit and the protectors of national sovereignty. For the most part, like the civilians they replaced, they also lacked the ability to correct the economic problems now facing their nations.

The nationalist ideal took on a new form under these leaders, in many cases with a decidedly xenophobic tint. Tolerance for the actions of neighboring republics and the United States ran short, since the neighbors could be viewed as competitors, and the United States (chiefly because of its repeated interventions in the Caribbean and Central America) was increasingly perceived as an exploitative nemesis which had precipitated the dire situation in which the continent now found itself.

This turbulent period witnessed the adoption of geopolitical philosophy by the military intelligentsia of Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Elements of the political systems of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy became role models for a number of regimes as these nations seemed to vanquish



their respective economic problems.<sup>50</sup> The democratic ideal was dispensed with in a time that seemed to call for desperate measures.

### 3. Military Confrontations, 1900-1945

The development of armies organized along modern lines, with the equipment and the logistics infrastructure to employ them, coupled with competition for resources on a much higher level than in the previous century, would seem to presage an era of numerous wars and interstate military adventures. Nevertheless, this was not the case until the 1930s.

#### a. Border Tensions

Boundary disputes, nationalist fervor and desire for resources led to some faceoffs among states, but none of these went much farther than skirmishes with few casualties and no declarations of war. Many of them led to extensive though not always productive diplomatic negotiation, frequently with third-party mediation involved. For example, Chile and Argentina engaged in considerable saber-rattling in 1902 in the midst of negotiations over Patagonia, but a prompt British arbitral decision cooled passions.<sup>51</sup>

In other cases, third parties sometimes provided the catalyst for confrontation, as in the Acre dispute between Bolivia and Brazil. Foreign interests moved into the rubber-rich region at the turn of the century, with concessions from both governments to operate in the disputed territory. In 1903 Brazilian colonists in Acre rebelled, and

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<sup>50</sup> For example, Vargas set up a corporatist-paternalist state; he tolerated the openly fascist Integralistas for several years, although he eventually purged them. Fagg states (p. 972) that Vargas was "fascinated" by Hitler. Argentina's Uriburu was and admirer of Mussolini, and attempted to set up a corporate state in the Fascist tradition. See James D. Rudolph, ed., Argentina: A Country Study (Washington D.C.: American University Press, 1986), page 48.

<sup>51</sup> A large statue, cast from old Spanish cannon and representing Christ ("the Christ of the Andes") was erected on the boundary line at Uspallata Pass in 1904 to commemorate the agreement and as a token of eternal peace between the two nations. Ireland, page 27.

war seemed imminent. Brazil shut off the Amazon to Bolivian traffic, and both countries sent troops. A contingent led by the Bolivian president force marched through the jungle with appalling losses to disease and climate only to be defeated by the rebels.

In the end, Bolivia yielded 73,276 square miles of territory through the Treaty of Petrópolis. U.S. and European interests were paid off by Brazil, which continued its political integration of the Amazon basin. Surprisingly, subsequent to the loss of territory relations between the two countries improved--further testimony to Brazilian negotiating skills.<sup>52</sup>

Peru's long-simmering dispute with Chile over the return of southern territories threatened to ignite on several occasions into war, but negotiation and Chilean military might prevented a clash. In 1910, President Leguía (then in his first term) broke relations with Chile, and both countries embarked on a costly arms race; while seemed on the brink of war on several occasions, actual military confrontation was avoided. United States arbitration finally resolved the issue by the Treaty of Lima in 1929, but ultranationalists in Peru remained unsatisfied.<sup>53</sup>

#### b. The Leticia Dispute

Peru was involved in a military clash just short of war with another of its neighbors, Colombia. In his second term, Leguía had maneuvered to settle a boundary dispute with Colombia and thus isolate Ecuador, securing Peru's northern flanks during the more critical negotiations with Chile; the resulting treaty had ceded some territory to Colombia, including access to the Amazon River. Realizing

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<sup>52</sup> J. Valerie Fifer, Bolivia: Land, Location and Politics Since 1825 (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), pages 128-130. The Bolivian highlanders suffered greatly in the low altitudes and heat of the jungle; in addition, their opponents wore green uniforms, which gave them a considerable advantage over the Bolivians, who wore coarse white homespun.

<sup>53</sup> Werlich, page 169.



the cession would be unpopular, the treaty's terms initially were not revealed. In part due to resentment over the treaty, Leguía was overthrown in 1930.

In August 1932, 300 armed Peruvian civilians, apparently acting without the knowledge of the government, seized the Amazon town of Leticia, ceded to Colombia in the treaty and the focus of the dispute. President Sánchez Cerro, the military officer who had deposed Leguía and was subsequently elected president, initially disavowed the action, but political circumstances soon made it inexpedient to back down; returning the captured territory would place his unpopular administration in jeopardy. Sánchez Cerro rejected U.S. and Brazilian mediation offers, Peruvian regular troops dislodged the civilians at Leticia but did not return the occupied town to the Colombian authorities, and war seemed imminent.<sup>54</sup>

The Peruvian position seemed strong enough; there were 1,000 troops with artillery in the theater of operations, a naval base at Iquitos with ships and a squadron of seaplanes. Resupply through Peruvian territory was difficult but possible. The Colombians, on the other hand, had no military or naval forces in the theater, nor any direct surface communications with the area.<sup>55</sup> They mounted an amphibious operation by ferrying 1,000 troops around to the area via the mouth of the Amazon; this operation necessitated Brazilian approval, which was granted.

Despite the difficulties of such a campaign and the sizable initial Peruvian advantage, the Colombians recaptured much of their lost territory in short order, suffering only 30 losses against 800 Peruvian casualties!<sup>56</sup> Faced with this embarrassing result, Sánchez Cerro placed Peru on a war footing, ordering a troop callup and

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<sup>54</sup> Werlich, page 199; Ireland, page 198.

<sup>55</sup> English, page 168.

<sup>56</sup> English page 174.

dispatching a cruiser and two submarines to the Caribbean; however, while reviewing 25,000 new recruits on 30 April 1933, he was assassinated by a leftist youth.<sup>57</sup> His successor, General Benavides, had been selected as the commander of Peruvian forces for the looming war; as ambassador to London, however, he had met and was on good personal terms with prominent Colombian politicians. He began serious negotiations, and the situation was defused. In the end, through Benavides' political acumen, the original treaty was ratified by the Peruvian parliament.

The Leticia conflict is of interest because of the nature of the players involved and the active participation of a peacekeeping body, the League of Nations. The withdrawal of Peruvians from Leticia, overseen by the League, was the first instance of assumption of direct control over territory by the League of Nations, and the first actual operation by the League in the Western hemisphere.<sup>58</sup> Although the League was unsuccessful in its attempts to establish mediation and to keep the conflict from escalating, it provided a suitable framework and forum for termination of hostilities and conflict resolution.

The nature of the players cannot be overlooked; had Sánchez Cerro remained in power, or been succeeded by an equally demagogic leader, the outcome would almost certainly have been war. Popular discontent over what amounted to capitulation was ably deflected by Benavides, whose class background, widespread respect as a national figure, and moderate, conciliatory rule gave him a degree of stability and legitimacy that the "upstart" mestizo populist demagogue

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<sup>57</sup> The assassination was linked to internal ideological dissent, rather than to the Leticia affair.

<sup>58</sup> Ireland, page 203. Both Colombia and Peru belonged to the League. The League was officially notified of the situation by Colombia on 2 January 1933; the League Council then requested information from both parties and asked that they refrain from using force. Subsequent League activity was initiated by the League, rather than by the participants.

Sánchez Cerro had never enjoyed. To his credit, Benavides achieved peace without resorting to any internal scapegoats.

The original casus belli was dropped in the government's lap by private individuals, motivated much more by nationalism than by economic concerns.<sup>59</sup> The principal variables in the decision to continue the hostile actions appear to have been Sánchez Cerro's inability to accept the possibility of loss of popular support (a function of both his character and his self-perception of legitimacy), and his personal inclination to go to war (a function of his style of rule and his radical nationalistic ideology).<sup>60</sup> Benavides kept Sánchez Cerro's cabinet after assuming office; it therefore seems that the ideologies of the two men and their personalities (rather than any actual political imperatives) were truly the major determinants.

Once again, the military or non-military character of a nation's government proved of little relevance in the decision to engage in hostilities. Colombia's civilian government proved willing to go to war to defend a thinly populated (less than 1,000 inhabitants), distant territorial acquisition gained by a controversial treaty.<sup>61</sup> Thus the occupational-institutional background of the governments does not appear to have been a factor in the decision to engage in violence.

Economic well-being apparently was not a factor either; neither country was in good financial shape, and could ill afford to go to war. Winning or losing would have

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<sup>59</sup> Access to resources (patrimonio nacional) is a component of nationalism in this type of incident, as much as national pride. It would be hard nonetheless to make a case for the Leticia incident as motivated by a desire to control a resource other than territory itself (not exactly a scarce commodity in the thinly populated jungle region).

<sup>60</sup> While there are some parallels here with the South Atlantic War, there are also major differences--chief among them Sánchez Cerro's intent to continue after suffering major losses.

<sup>61</sup> Although Colombia was admittedly the aggrieved party, and this may have made the decision easier.



little immediate impact on the economy. As a final note, despite poor economic conditions, both sides retained the enlarged militaries which they had built up during the conflict; Peru, because of the perennial disputes with Chile and Ecuador, and Colombia allegedly as a result of "an opportune reassessment of the importance of the Colombian armed forces."<sup>62</sup>

c. The Chaco War

The two principal conflicts of the preceding century left their mark on Bolivia and Paraguay; both nations suffered major military defeats and territorial losses, and their economic status since the wars had been precarious. The two nations had been rivals over their borders since colonial times; between 1879 and 1913, they negotiated several treaties designed to fix a boundary in the region known as the Chaco Boreal (Northern Chaco) but none of these treaties was ratified by both countries.<sup>63</sup> Paraguayan settlers (chiefly Mennonites) had gradually moved into the area, and a majority of the population considered itself tied to Paraguay.

The original issues in the dispute involved access to the Paraguay River; in the mid-Twenties, however, oil exploration indicated that there might be deposits in the area. Coupled with the opportunity to vindicate past humiliations of territorial loss, this was a strong incentive for both of the impoverished nations to assert claims to the area. Both sides built forts across from each other and expanded communications with the remote region.

The Argentine press widely reported that the tension in the area was part of a power play between oil companies (Royal Dutch/Shell vs. Standard Oil), which

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<sup>62</sup> English, page 169. Although Colombia also had an ongoing dispute with Venezuela over the Guajira Peninsula, tensions at the time were not high enough to justify maintaining a large armed force.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas E. Weil, et al, Paraguay: A Country Study ((The American University: Washington D.C. 1972), page 144.

guaranteed arms credit for the potential contenders.<sup>64</sup> The United States did nothing to block arms shipments to Bolivia via the Panama Canal, and when Peru requested State Department advice regarding sending arms from Peruvian ports to Bolivia, Washington declined to respond. Neither side was serious about negotiations, which appeared to be delaying tactics while positions were strengthened. League of Nations involvement and mediation efforts by Argentina and Brazil were ineffective. Several skirmishes took place along the border beginning in 1928, and nationalist tensions gradually rose to fever pitch. In the midst of negotiations for a nonaggression pact, the Bolivians occupied a Paraguayan fort in June 1932, and the war was on.

Despite the poverty of the belligerents and the distances and terrain involved, the war was on a relatively large scale. It caused great consternation among the other countries of the continent, which continued desperate efforts at mediation; nevertheless, war was declared in March 1933. In a manifestation of its new attitude toward Latin America, the Roosevelt administration officially announced that it would embargo arms sales to the combatants.

While remaining officially neutral, Argentina backed Paraguay and Chile supported Bolivia.<sup>65</sup> This was a function of geopolitics of the "interior" for Argentina, which was trying to obtain better leverage in one of the buffer states with Brazil. Argentina's action triggered a Chilean response, although Chile had previously been actively involved in playing Bolivia off against Peru with carrot-and-stick tactics.<sup>66</sup> Partly for this reason, and because Peru

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<sup>64</sup> Fifer, page 210. In addition, Senator Huey P. Long (D-La.) in 1934 and 1935 charged on the Senate floor that Standard Oil was financing the Bolivian side of the war. The company denied the charges. Ireland, page 90.

<sup>65</sup> Ireland, page 81.

<sup>66</sup> Chile's open support for Bolivia, including allowing passage of arms through Arica, led to a rupture of relations with Paraguay in 1934.



traditionally supported Argentina as a counterweight to Chile, now of potentially vital importance because of the impending war with Colombia, which could leave a flank open--Peru also backed Paraguay.

Military operations were a total disaster for Bolivia, which at the beginning of the war had a much better position on paper than Paraguay. Bolivian's German advisor tried to use World War I trench warfare and direct offensive tactics, and ignored to his misfortune the Paraguayan style of guerrilla and maneuver warfare. Although Bolivia fielded many more men than Paraguay, troops were seldom deployed in sufficient numbers, and Bolivia's superior air power was underemployed.<sup>67</sup> The Bolivian troops, mostly from the high sierra, suffered terribly in the unaccustomed heat and humidity, in addition to having to march 400 miles from the nearest railhead; there were as many casualties from disease as from the war's intense combat.<sup>68</sup>

After a string of defeats, Bolivia accepted a peace plan proposed by the League of Nations in December 1934; Paraguay had military momentum, however, and would not negotiate. When the League requested an embargo against Paraguay because of this intransigence, Paraguay announced it was quitting the League. By May of 1935, the Paraguayan offensive had stalled, but they had consolidated most of the disputed territory. The next month, they agreed to peace terms proposed by a six-nation commission made up of representatives from the U.S., Argentina, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, and Brazil. Paraguay kept the territory and Bolivia was guaranteed access to the Paraguay River.

In the three years of declared war, total estimated casualties were 250,000; Bolivia (pop. 3 million in 1930) suffered 55,000 killed and 83,000 ill or wounded, while Paraguay (pop. 836,000) had 45,000 killed and 67,000

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<sup>67</sup> Fifer, pages 212-214.

<sup>68</sup> Weil, et al, page 162.

ill or wounded. The Bolivian casualty rate (half of all the personnel mobilized) left the eastern region of the country virtually depopulated; the defeat was another humiliation after the disastrous War of the Pacific, and added further to Bolivia's economic and political morass. Paraguay doubled its geographic size, but could ill afford the expenditure in men or money.

The war ended when one side achieved its principal military objectives and the other was too exhausted to continue.<sup>69</sup> The negotiation efforts by the League and the American nations were of little consequence given the strong nationalistic overtones of the drive to war in both countries. While foreign mediation provided a forum for discussion, neither side was willing to use it voluntarily as a means of war termination. Foreign capitalist interests and support from geopolitically-oriented neighbors may have provided the means for the war to continue longer than it might have, but nationalist sentiment was the principal factor behind this war.<sup>70</sup>

Economic motives cannot be dismissed entirely; the lure of oil wealth probably drove Bolivia to press its claims. Nevertheless, these arguments were not voiced by the countries involved until late in the war, suggesting that the nationalist sentiment predominated over economic interest.

Militarism and armamentism very likely played a hand in the decision to go to war. The Bolivians had what seemed to be a vastly superior military, and may have calculated on a short and successful campaign. They severely underestimated enemy capabilities, and overrated their own. Paraguay's initially deployed force consistently defeated

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<sup>69</sup> Ireland, page 95.

<sup>70</sup> Bolivian President Salamanca's rationale for declaring war was stated as follows: "It might be asked if the Chaco is worth for Bolivia the pain of this sacrifice of life...but surely there is in this problem more than a balance of gains and losses; the very existence of Bolivia, her full sovereignty, her dignity as a nation, her honor." Quoted in Fifer, page 216.

larger Bolivian contingents; once a certain number of troops were committed and casualties incurred and inflicted, it was politically and militarily difficult for the Bolivians to scale down their effort.

The mediation efforts of the belligerents' neighbors and the United States disguised a willingness to provide arms conduits, especially through third-party contracts. If the other nations in the region had adhered to proclaimed principles of non-intervention and neutrality, the war could not have lasted as long as it did, especially between two landlocked countries. The League showed its inability to enforce any of its tenets--including the renunciation of force as a means to settle disputes, and the non-recognition of territorial gains obtained by force of arms.

#### d. Peru vs. Ecuador

The history of relations between Peru and Ecuador is characterized by near continuous boundary disputes. Twice in the 19th Century (1828 and 1859-60) the two countries had gone to war. Although both nations had submitted to arbitration, nothing was settled; in 1910, Peru had mobilized 22,000 men against Ecuador while arbitration was ongoing. Spain quit in frustration in 1910 after twenty-three years of trying to settle the coastal and jungle border issues; Leguía involved the United States in the Twenties, in his endless maneuvering to secure his position vis-a-vis Chile.<sup>71</sup> A treaty was signed in 1929, but was not implemented.

Peru delayed further discussion with Ecuador until 1936, when other more pressing national concerns with Chile, Colombia, and internal difficulties had been settled. Peruvian negotiators in Washington showed little desire to allow third-party mediation, especially since it appeared

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<sup>71</sup> Ecuador has historically sided with Chile, Peru's primary antagonist, against Peru, its own main antagonist.

that the U.S. negotiators were heading toward an "equitable arrangement;" the Peruvians probably felt they could get better terms from bilateral negotiation due to Peru's greater strength.<sup>72</sup>

The Peruvian military, and Peruvian national pride, still rankled from the defeat in the Leticia incident. The Peruvian military had remained at a substantial personnel level, training had improved, and equipment had been modernized. In 1940, Peru's president, Manuel Prado, enjoyed popular and military support, and the economy was doing well. Ecuador had an unpopular and unstable government, and a small, poorly trained, ill-equipped, military. The outbreak of World War II occupied the attention of the United States, which was unlikely to intervene in Ecuador's favor.

In October of 1940, Peru began concentrating troops along the border, including armored, naval, aircraft, and airborne units. After a few border skirmishes, an overwhelming Peruvian force crossed the border on 5 July 1941; by 31 July, effective Ecuadorian resistance had ceased, the Peruvian forces occupied most of the key positions in the disputed areas, and the undeclared war was over.

Washington viewed the conflict more seriously than it ordinarily would have, especially after the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor; U.S. policy was oriented toward obtaining continental solidarity in the face of a common foe. At the Third Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Rio de Janeiro in January 1942, the U.S. and Brazil, along with Argentina and Chile, pressed the two sides to come to an agreement. On 31 January, the last day of the meeting, a treaty was signed whereby Ecuador surrendered her claim to 80,000 square miles of territory.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Werlich (page 223) claims Peru even at this point was already prepared to go to war if necessary. See also Calvert, page 16.

<sup>73</sup> Werlich, page 224.



The Ecuadorians felt they were obligated to accept, not only by Washington's urging but because any further resistance was unrealistic and could result in renewed Peruvian advances. Within twenty years, Ecuador disavowed the treaty as an illegal imposition and because of (very) minor geographic omissions in the text. The issue remains alive to this day.

Peru had unquestionably started the war; any petty clashes could very probably have been controlled with a minimum of effort, especially since arbitration was in progress. Since Peru felt it had a stronger claim to the area, which would have given it a better bargaining position, its actions were indicative of a rather cynical intransigence based on might instead of right. This was a realpolitik approach, which flaunted most of the principles espoused by the League and most of the other war-renunciation treaties and organizations of the interwar period to which Peru supposedly adhered.<sup>74</sup> In Peru's defense, history had been unkind to the nation, which had "lost" huge amounts of territory through negotiation.

Surprisingly, after the war with Ecuador, the Peruvian military's ties with the United States increased dramatically, as Washington sought to counterbalance Argentina and Chile's close ties to the Axis powers. The Peruvian Army, which had doubled in size to 32,000 men during the preparations for the conflict with Ecuador, remained at that level. The U.S. shipped substantial quantities of arms to Peru, and the U.S. military presence in the country swelled. Peru provided basing rights to U.S. aircraft, including anti-submarine warfare and combat reconnaissance

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<sup>74</sup> Peru had signed and adhered to the Gondra Treaty, which enjoined it to avoid or prevent conflicts between American states; the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which renounced war as an instrument of national policy except in self-defense; the 1929 Conference on Conciliation and Arbitration; the 1936 South American Anti-War Pact; and a number of bilateral pacts which eschewed the use of war to settle disputes. See Ireland, Chapter III.



units. Pressing national security concerns therefore overrode any earlier doctrine regarding aggression and arms transfers to potential belligerents.

#### C. U.S. PRIMACY: 1938-1967

Franklin Roosevelt's presidency (1933-1945) officially inaugurated the Good Neighbor Policy, a revised U.S. outlook toward Latin America. It involved reduced interference in domestic affairs, but at the same time did not withdraw the military "helping hand" of advisory groups and arms sales. When the Second World War broke out, this policy paid political and military dividends, often in both directions. Although the policy was gradually dismantled, the system which it fostered under United States leadership had a profound effect on hemispheric relations and conflict for nearly three decades.

##### 1. The Good Neighbor Policy

Between 1898 and 1934, U.S. military intervention in Latin America, especially in the Caribbean and Central America, was a matter of course. The U.S. sent military expeditions to, among others, Haiti (occupied 1915-1934) and Nicaragua (occupied 1909-25 and 1926-33). By the late Twenties, this policy was already contested even within the U.S. government. The Democratic administration which swept into power in the United States after the 1932 elections chose to follow a different course, known as the Good Neighbor Policy, which eschewed intervention and interference.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> The classic works on the genesis and decline of the Good Neighbor Policy are the late Bryce Wood's The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), and its sequel, The Dismantling of the Good Neighbor Policy (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985). In both volumes, Wood pointed out that the Good Neighbor Policy was a policy and not just rhetoric, "in that it was principled action demonstrating in promise and behavior over a period of time such evidence of continuity that assumptions of stability may with confidence be based on it" (Dismantling, page ix). Wood defines intervention as sending armed forces to a country without being requested to do so, while interference means offering advice, exerting economic

One of the new administration's first acts was to attend the Montevideo Conference of the Pan American Union in 1933. The United States put forth a proposal for a hemispheric peacekeeping mechanism, but it was blocked by Argentina.<sup>76</sup> The U.S. did, in a qualified manner, accept the principle of nonintervention at the Conference by signing the Convention on the Rights and Duties of States.

In 1936, on the suggestion of President Roosevelt, representatives of all twenty-one American republics met at Buenos Aires. A declaration of inter-American solidarity and cooperation stated four principles: 1) no acquisition of territory by force; 2) intervention of one state in the internal or external affairs of another "directly or indirectly for whatever reason" was condemned; 3) compulsory collection of pecuniary obligations was illegal; and 4) every difference or dispute among American nations, no matter what its nature or origin, would be solved by conciliation, arbitration, or international justice. The non-intervention convention was hailed by the Latin Americans as ending the Monroe Doctrine; on the other hand, a collective security convention was viewed by the U.S. as making the Monroe Doctrine an inter-American (rather than a unilateral) policy.<sup>77</sup> Despite the differences in outlook, this was the beginning of a true inter-American regional system.

## 2. The Second World War

The United States adhered faithfully to the principles of the Good Neighbor Policy until security pressure, or making shows of force to affect or influence local political issues (page xi).

<sup>76</sup> Craig H. Robinson, "Government and Politics" in Rudolph, Argentina: A Country Study (Washington D.C.: American University Press, 1985). Robinson states that Argentina's views were that while the Caribbean and Central America were within the U.S. sphere of influence, South America should remain autonomous.

<sup>77</sup> There was some disagreement over the issue of a peace organization; Argentina and Mexico proposed including European nations, to which the U.S., Colombia, and Brazil were opposed. Material on the conference was drawn from Ireland, pages 315-316.

concerns over the deteriorating situation in Europe and Asia forced a reassessment and reorientation. In the initial phases of the war, Washington tried to remain within the boundaries of the Policy in organizing support in Latin America. Thus, a Foreign Ministers' Meeting of Consultation was held in Panama in 1939 when war broke out, and in Havana after France fell in 1940; the Panama meeting proclaimed neutrality for the Americas and defined a neutrality zone, while the Havana conference adopted the Declaration of Reciprocal Assistance and Cooperation for the Defense of the Americas. A series of military-to-military talks between the U.S. and several nations followed.<sup>78</sup>

After Pearl Harbor, Washington made a major push for continental solidarity, embodied in the Rio Conference of 1942 and its resolutions on collective security.<sup>79</sup>

Not all the Latin American countries were as quick to break their ties with the Axis as Washington hoped; significant pressure had to be exerted for stubborn Argentina to join in declaring war on Germany.

During the war, several of the South American nations cooperated closely with the United States--none more so than Brazil, which provided the only sizable contingent of Latin American troops (the 25,000-man Brazilian Expeditionary Force) to fight in Europe, as well as ample basing rights and political support; in return, three-fourths of all U.S. military aid to Latin America in the war period went to Brazil.<sup>80</sup> Other nations, including Colombia and Peru,

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<sup>78</sup> Wesson, page 98; Wesson also notes that "satisfactory" bilateral agreements were reached with all militaries except Argentina's.

<sup>79</sup> The states gathered at Rio affirmed that aggression against one was aggression against all, and the republics "recommended to each other" that they break relations with the Axis. Wood (1985), page 1.

<sup>80</sup> Abraham F. Lowenthal, Partners in Conflict (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1987), page 124. Lowenthal notes that although Brazil's President Getulio Vargas had played off Germany and the United States against each other in the Thirties, he opted for reaffirmation of Brazil's historic "special relationship" with the U.S. by 1940.



provided basing rights and aided in patrol and local security activities.<sup>81</sup>

In 1944, the United States called for an inter-American Conference, held at Chapultepec Palace in Mexico, which laid the groundwork for Latin American membership in a future United Nations. It also envisioned another supranational organization within the United Nations framework but on a regional as opposed to worldwide basis.<sup>82</sup>

### 3. The Organization of American States

The groundwork for hemispheric defense and conflict control was laid down by the 1947 Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (also known as TIAR or the Rio Treaty), which pledged that an attack against one nation was an attack against all the others, and further obligated signatories to submit the controversies among them to procedures in force in the Inter-American System.

In 1948, the Bogotá Conference set down the guidelines for an "Organization of American States" (OAS), whose security and political framework were set up in the Rio Conference later that year. It was based on the following "four pillars": non-intervention in domestic affairs of members; equality under law for all states; settling of hemispheric conflict through peaceful means if possible, but through forceful collective measures if necessary; and common defense against external threats.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Wesson, page 85. Mexico provided an air squadron which fought in the Far East; Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia granted use of air and naval bases (Fagg, page 1020).

<sup>82</sup> Wood, pages 80-85. Of note, the Chapultepec agreement dropped the "directly or indirectly, for whatever reason" from the clause on non-intervention. See Charles D. Fenwick, International Law (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), page 289.

<sup>83</sup> Brian Kelley, "The Inter-American System", unpublished paper for NS3530 course at the Naval PostGraduate School, Monterey, December 1987.

One of its first successes was to stop Nicaraguan intervention in Costa Rica in 1948.<sup>84</sup> The OAS system provided what the Truman administration saw as the only legitimization of intervention: multi-lateral action by the entire inter-American system.

After the war, the Truman administration largely continued FDR's policy; in 1949, Secretary of State Acheson reaffirmed the principle of non-intervention.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, with the rest of the world--and thereby potential alternative markets for and influences on Latin America--in a shambles, the relationship between the United States and lands to the south necessarily took on a different perspective. United States influence was economically and politically predominant in Latin America until the late 1950's; this period is characterized as one of American "hegemony" in the hemisphere.

In addition, there was no doubt that Latin America, especially given the apparent spirit of cooperation which her leaders manifested, was very low on the list of U.S. foreign policy priorities (much to Latin America's chagrin, there was no version of the Marshall Plan which looked south). Washington's concerns were oriented far more toward Europe, Asia, and the Middle East; North American economic and military might in the hemisphere allowed if not enforced this complacency. By and large, the region had no ability of its own to project power or build up its worldwide importance

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<sup>84</sup> Wood, page 133.

<sup>85</sup> One area of politics where the Truman administration may be said to have interfered was in its barely concealed but understandable postwar dislike for dictators, and its consequent preference for democratic regimes. This feature was to prove an important factor in the demise of the Vargas regime in Brazil, and the forcing from office of Venezuela's Isaías Medina. John V. Lombardi, *Venezuela* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), page 222. Burns, page 230, misjudges Peruvian president Prado, including him in the list of "strongmen who were forced from office in 1945;" in fact, Prado presided over the fairest elections Peru had seen since 1931, and voluntarily handed over power to his elected successor. Burns also does a disservice to Colombian president Lopez Pumarejo, who was forced from office but hardly qualifies as a "strongman."



save as an adjunct or ally of U.S. foreign policy with its increasingly East-West, anti-communist orientation.

U.S. concern over the spread of communist influence worldwide gradually expanded the idea of legitimate intervention in Latin America to mean that "if a clearly identifiable communist regime should establish itself in the hemisphere, collective action with our leadership, would probably be supported in Latin America."<sup>86</sup> This single-minded preoccupation with communism, not shared to the same extent by other member nations, was to significantly weaken OAS solidarity.<sup>87</sup>

The Eisenhower administration changed the emphasis on U.S. Latin American policy from non-intervention into one of countering any glimmers of communist influence with whatever methods were deemed necessary. In 1954, at the instigation of the United States, the Tenth Inter-American Conference in Caracas (1954) condemned international communism as a "threat to the sovereignty... of Latin American states, endangering the peace of America, and would call for appropriate action...."<sup>88</sup>

Latin America underwent a demographic, political and economic transformation during the Fifties, accompanied by a growing self-awareness and a renewal of the Thirties' desire for reduced dependence. Repeated U.S. intervention or interference in Latin America, and highly visible U.S. economic and cultural predominance of the time, made North American leadership difficult to support or explain for many of the OAS member states' regimes. In many cases, the OAS provided hemispheric legitimation for U.S. actions, such as intervention in Guatemala in 1954 and the Bay of Pigs

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<sup>86</sup> Wood, page 144.

<sup>87</sup> Although several countries shared U.S. dislike of communism. Colombia, for example, provided 3,000 combat troops (a third of her army) to the United Nations Forces in Korea. Wesson, page 85.

<sup>88</sup> Wood, Dismantling, page 171.

incident in 1961, but only in the face of broad popular opposition. Cuba's defection was a severe blow to solidarity, although subsequent Cuban actions momentarily strengthened the OAS by giving it unity of purpose (the Betancourt Doctrine of resisting foreign-instigated communist subversion); however, U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 erased any gains.

While the OAS provided a forum for multilateral discussion of conflicts within the organization, it did not entirely replace independent bilateral or multilateral diplomacy for conflict resolution or deterrent purposes. Argentina, for example, sought to establish a South Atlantic Treaty Organization which included only Uruguay, Brazil and Paraguay in 1957; the "Pacto Atlántico Sur" that emerged from this effort concerned only training exercises, but Argentina evidently had plans in mind for a multilateral defense of the South Atlantic.<sup>89</sup> As disenchantment with the OAS grew, this type of negotiation and sub-regional alliance attempts multiplied.

In summary, the OAS as initially conceived presented a good opportunity for a hemispheric collective security organization, which would defend against extracontinental aggression, but would also focus on preventing intrahemispheric conflict. Although it continues to function, past North American dominance of the organization and disregard for the established principles of the inter-American system (which the United States had enunciated to begin with) gradually rendered the OAS ineffective as a hemispheric organization. Other major difficulties within

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<sup>89</sup> Andrew Hurrell, "The Politics of South Atlantic Security: A Survey of Proposals for a South Atlantic Treaty Organization." Journal of International Affairs, Volume 59:2, Spring 1983. Page 181.

the OAS are a ponderous bureaucratic edifice and confusion over the organization's exact functions.<sup>90</sup>

#### 4. The U.S. and the South American Military, 1945-1967

##### a. Ideology and Weapons Procurement

The postwar period in South America was characterized by U.S. military predominance. European missions were replaced almost in their entirety by U.S. training and equipment, arranged on a bilateral basis (Mutual Defense Agreements) rather than through a multilateral organization such as the OAS. Large numbers of personnel from South American armed forces received training at U.S. bases in Panama and the United States under the International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program.<sup>91</sup>

Part of the motive behind this was ideological; sending military missions and training personnel in U.S. facilities, it was hoped, "would have a democratic influence on Latin American military attitudes."<sup>92</sup> U.S. training emphasized democratic values and military "professionalization", i.e. depoliticization, highly specialized skills, and the acceptance of the legitimacy of civilian control of the military.<sup>93</sup> To a significant degree,

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<sup>90</sup> Aside from its security-oriented duties, the OAS also had functions ranging from treaties, maritime fishing rights, and territorial integrity, to commercial aviation, taxation of tourism, and music. In addition, frequent governmental changes complicated the mission of the delegates, and further clouded both the nature of their mission and their accountability. Efforts at organizational reform were largely unsuccessful. Kelley, pages 12-13.

<sup>91</sup> IMET was a major program; for example, from 1950 to 1967, 4,279 Peruvian military personnel were trained under the program, with U.S.\$10.6 million disbursed. U.S. Foreign Military Assistance Programs (Washington D.C.: Government Publishing Office, for the Department of Defense, 1977), page 26.

<sup>92</sup> Wood, Dismantling, page 137.

<sup>93</sup> Alfred Stepan, "The New Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion," in Abraham Lowenthal and Samuel J. Fitch, editors, Armies and Politics in Latin America (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 1986), page 138. In Stepan's typology, these values are defined as "old" professionalism; "new" professionalism takes a much more developmentalist and politically involved approach.

economic and military aid were tied to democratic tendency as well as to anti-communist orthodoxy.<sup>94</sup>

The emphasis of United States military philosophy toward Latin America changed substantially after 1945. Whereas a major consideration of U.S. planners during the war had been to employ South American allies in a conventional military role against extracontinental threats, the new role envisioned for South American armed forces after the war was to control the spread of communism in the hemisphere. The manner in which they were to do this was by acting as a reserve force against external aggression. This was generally reflected in U.S. training of Latin American personnel.

By the late 1950's and early 1960's, the United States awoke to the fact that anti-U.S. resentment in South America throughout most social levels was running high. Castro's takeover of Cuba was a rude blow to U.S. complacency. In reaction, John F. Kennedy's policies fostered the developmentalist outlook in order to win the "hearts and minds" campaign against communist subversion, while enhancing the image of the United States at the popular level. The synthesis of his ideology was the Alliance for Progress, which among other things shifted the MAP to providing a heavy proportion of development-oriented materials, such as road-building equipment, and weapons suited for counterinsurgency rather than more traditional military supplies.<sup>95</sup>

#### b. The New Professionalism

The armed forces in at least two Latin American nations, Brazil and Peru, had since the 1950's established in their philosophy the link among economic development, social justice (in Peru) and counterinsurgency. They believed that

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<sup>94</sup> Wood, Dismantling, page 149.

<sup>95</sup> Augusto Varas, Militarization and the International Arms Race in Latin America, page 43.



in order to successfully combat the spread of communist subversion, or in any case of mass popular unrest, it was necessary to alleviate to some extent critical social and economic difficulties which were the root cause of the problem.

This in turn became a "new" professionalism, with the military deeply politicized, and seeking highly interrelated military and political skills; the armed forces' role expanded from conventional operations to participation in and management of the political process, not in the name of a caudillo, but in the service of national development.<sup>96</sup>

The military's self-perception as the embodiment of the nation and the defender of sovereignty had finally found a peacetime cause. Their mission expanded beyond merely preventing or combating external aggression, to nation-building and to ensuring the internal security which allowed it. This trend had significant political repercussions. The military in most countries ceased to regard themselves as enforcers for an elite which was seemingly incapable of bringing about necessary changes in an orderly fashion; as the need for accelerated development seemed to grow, they saw instead that, as an institution, they had more of the nation's interests in mind and a greater capability to bring them to fruition than the civilian sector.

A major component of development was the exploitation of resources which would help the nation along its path, to include space resources for a growing population as well as mineral, maritime and agricultural space. The defense or acquisition of these resources from external competitors had long been viewed as a military mission. As

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<sup>96</sup> Stepan, page 192. David Winterford summarizes the new missions of the military in "Security, Sovereignty, and Economics," Pacific Focus Vol II, No. 1, Spring 1987: 1) symbolizing national sovereignty; 2) protecting external security; 3) contributing to internal security; 4) and engaging in "civic action and developmental activity."

the military perceived the development crisis was growing more acute, control over these resources became essential. Protection of resources became a "geostrategic" requirement in a competitive world. This led to tensions with hemispheric and extracontinental agents as rivalries and competing claims flared.

One of the very few military incidents of the 1950's occurred over the resource issue, when in 1952 Argentine naval personnel allegedly fired at a British party near the South Orkneys; both nations began moving naval units toward the area, and relations deteriorated to the point where the International Court of Justice refused British requests to handle the case, since it appeared the two parties did not share "a constructive attitude of mutual trust and cooperation."<sup>97</sup> Although this could be viewed as another sovereignty dispute, and it can also be attributed to the militant nationalism of Juan Domingo Peron, it had explicit resource-driven and strategic overtones.

c. Arms Purchases and the U.S.

One tenet of U.S. policy that remained steadfast throughout this period was to avoid an arms race in the region by preventing the introduction of high-performance or advanced weapons systems. Since the United States had become practically the only supplier of big-ticket items, and the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Military Assistance Program (MAP) were limited to procurement of U.S.-manufactured equipment, the South American nations had very little choice in the matter.

Geoffrey Kemp provides a number of reasons why advanced weapons such as supersonic aircraft had not been introduced to mainland Latin America by the mid-sixties: 1) the general effort of the U.S. legislative and Executive

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<sup>97</sup> Francisco Orrego Vicuña, "Antarctic Conflict and International Cooperation," in Antarctic Treaty System: An Assessment (Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 1986), page 58. The Argentines subsequently claimed they were merely hailing the British vessel to see if all was well.

branches to prevent it; 2) the inability or unwillingness of the Soviet Union to do so; 4) the close-knit security ties between the U.S. and its Latin American allies; 4) lack of purchasing power by potential recipients; and 5) U.S. efforts to redirect arms purchases toward naval (1947-1960) and counterinsurgency (1950's on) missions.<sup>98</sup>

The U.S. perceived its arms policy as in effect reducing the ability of the various South American arms recipients to wage modern interstate war by depriving them of the opportunity to purchase systems of sufficient quality and in sufficient numbers to do so. In addition, it theoretically provided the U.S. a discreet leverage on the arms spending ceiling for individual countries, ensuring that government expenditures focused on more productive development-related activities.

#### d. Military Spending

The size, organization, and equipment of the South American armed forces by the 1960's differed dramatically relative to what they had been before the war. This was a function of a different orientation of the armed forces as well as broader economic and political change in South America in the postwar era. In real terms, there was an increase in military spending throughout the continent (See Table II). Of note, increases in military strength show very little relation to the type of government in power; there appears to be closer relation to economic well-being, and to perception of possible conflict or threat.<sup>99</sup>

U.S. arms supplied at reduced prices (through the Foreign Military Sales program) or as outright grants

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<sup>98</sup> Geoffrey Kemp, "The Prospects for Arms Control in Latin America," in Philippe C. Schmitter, editor, Military Rule in Latin America (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1973), page 205-206.

<sup>99</sup> For example, Brazil's period of greatest military growth after the war was during the civilian government of Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-61); Joao Goulart (1961-64), who was deposed by the military, projected major pay increases for the armed forces.

(through the Military Assistance Program) also helped to keep arms expenditures at a relatively low level. A significant amount of World War II surplus equipment was sold or transferred to South America as military assistance. By the late 1950's, almost all of the South American nations' arsenals included substantial quantities of U.S.-supplied materiel, greatly increasing the size of arsenals, but firmly establishing a near-total dependency on the United States as the source for weapons.

Notwithstanding the increases in equipment, the chief pressures for increased military spending were due to personnel and organizational requirements, rather than to armaments purchases; as an example, manpower strength of South American armed forces expanded from 220,000 in 1940 to 540,000 in 1968.<sup>100</sup> Gertrude Heare notes that such modernizations to the military structure as training schools, retirement programs, permanent cadres, housing and health facilities, etc., vastly increased spending.<sup>101</sup> Personnel costs frequently received priority over appropriations costs.

Sudden surges in funding were more likely attributable to governments compensating for programs which had been deferred due to austerity measures, than simply to rearming or extensive acquisitions. This helps in part to explain the apparent surge in military spending by military strongmen such as Rojas Pinilla, Perón, Ibañez, and Pérez Jiménez as infrastructure repairs and improvements rather

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<sup>100</sup> Gertrude E. Heare, Trends in Latin American Military Expenditures, 1940-1970 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office/Department of State, 1971), page 7. Demographics almost certainly had a great deal to do with this increase, since the population of South America grew at a high rate during this period. In 1960, Latin America had less than 200 million inhabitants; by 1970, there were close to 300 million. At the present time, there are over 400 million (Lowenthal, Partners, page 9).

<sup>101</sup> The expense of setting up separate air forces after 1940, with all the organizational infrastructure and new equipment they involved, was substantial.



than simply inventory modernization and massive arms purchases.<sup>102</sup>

In relative terms, however, military spending did not increase substantially; it received essentially the same "piece of the pie" as it had in the past, except now the pie was bigger (See Tables II and III). The South American economies were experiencing growth at the time; despite the substantial real growth of military expenditures in the major South American countries, they varied little as percentages of the GNP or of fiscal outlays during this period. Expenditures during the period are shown on the following table.

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<sup>102</sup> Heare, pages 7 and 8.

TABLE II

MILITARY EXPENDITURES AS PERCENT OF GDP, FISCAL SECTOR  
EXPENDITURES (FSE), AND MILITARY EXPENDITURES (ME) ON A  
CONSTANT PRICE BASIS, 1940-1970

	% of GDP	% of FSE	ME (1967 US\$) in millions
Argentina			
1940	2.3	23.2	131
1945	6.0	43.3	395
1950	3.0	24.6	272
1955	2.5	21.5	260
1960	2.9	20.9	356
1965	2.2	18.5	347
1970	2.0	16.1	388
Brazil			
1940	NA	24.0	171
1945	NA	26.3	178
1950	2.3	26.8	233
1955	2.3	28.2	313
1960	2.0	20.7	381
1964	1.7	14.0 (low)	391
1965	2.5	20.9	598
1970	2.0	17.2	792
Chile			
1940	2.5	25.2	49
1945	3.0	28.7	74
1950	2.4	17.9	64
1955	2.9	19.1	115
1960	3.4	15.6	135
1965	3.1	13.5	161
1970	3.3.	13.0	203
Peru			
1940	NA	21.2	18
1945	2.7	20.7	29
1950	2.6	20.0	43
1955	2.4	18.0	53
1960	2.1	14.7	58
1965	2.8	15.9	103
1970	3.3	17.2	145

Source: Heare

As the table shows, the percentage of fiscal expenditures fluctuated to some extent (note Argentina's 1945 figures), but generally stayed within a relatively narrow range, especially relative to the GDP. The overall trend of the percentage relationship over the years was downward for all nations, except Brazil after 1965 and Peru after 1967.<sup>103</sup> Real military growth in Latin America was substantial in comparison with the past, but military spending remained at a moderate level.

<sup>103</sup> Heare, page 2.

#### D. CONCLUSIONS

South American military establishments became relatively professionalized armed forces during the twentieth century, along the same lines and with the assistance of their counterparts in Europe and North America. The incidence of interstate war in the region continued at a relatively low level, and was once again, as in the previous century, characterized by initial aggression on the part of a state that considered itself better armed than its opponent, and hoped for a quick and sweeping victory.

In two of three cases studied (Chaco War and Leticia), internal factors either caused escalation or prevented de-escalation; in both cases, however, international organizations (the League and hemispheric multilateral groups) provided a framework for war termination, conflict resolution, and conciliation. In a third, an aggressor's conquests were recognized by international bodies which had specifically condemned aggression and renounced conquest as a means of territorial acquisition.

The United States established a policy which from the 1930's on did not truly reflect its status as the dominant military, economic, and political power in the hemisphere; instead, it chose a polite fiction of equality. However unrealistic this policy may have seemed, it allowed the U.S. to establish an unprecedented if temporary rapport with its hemispheric neighbors, and in somewhat modified form allowed for the building of an inter-American system that minimized outbreaks of conflict in South America for twenty years.

One key consideration is that it was not so much the OAS itself, as the arms policy and political-economic dominance of the U.S. that kept the peace. This ended when U.S. policy in the area failed to change to meet the needs of the situation, either through misperception, unwillingness or inability. In South American eyes, U.S. policy became too

obtrusive, and clashed with or drifted away from the perceived national security interests of the South American states.



#### IV. SOUTH AMERICA SINCE 1967: CONFLICT AND TENSION

The United States' policy of preventing the acquisition and spread of modern high-performance weapon systems appeared to have been accepted and formalized by the Latin American nations when they met at the 1967 Punta del Este (Uruguay) Hemispheric Summit Conference, and resolved not to purchase more weapons than each country needed for its own defense. That same year, Peru finalized the purchase of a squadron of Mirage supersonic jets from France, marking the first step in the effective end of the virtual U.S. monopoly on arms sales to the continent.

The increased modernization of the South American arsenals, which provided the newly armed nations with a potential capacity to wage war on a greater scale than ever before, was matched by a concurrent heightening in interstate tensions. The United States no longer exercised the same degree of influence or control over South American foreign relations which had allowed the perception of a "Pax Americana," and other international organizations and systems seemed unable to ease tensions. The situation reached its nadir in the late 1970's and early 1980's, when it appeared that armed conflict on a major scale among continental actors was not only possible but probable. When war did occur, however, its scope, direction, and motivation were unexpected and very probably unplanned even by the participants.

This chapter will address the 1967-1983 "arms race" in South America and seek to examine the reasons for the upsurge in tensions during that period; it will also examine prospects for potential conflicts among states based on developments since that time and long-term historical trends on the continent.

## A. THE ARMS RACE SINCE 1967

### 1. Peru: A Case Study for the Arms Race

Peru presents an interesting case study of South American armamentism. Peru's acquisition of Mirage fighter-bombers in 1967 was a watershed event for two reasons: it was the first time that a South American nation purchased supersonic aircraft, and it was also the first time since the Second World War that a South American nation had made a major arms purchase against strong U.S. opposition. It therefore introduced a new and more advanced type of weaponry into the region, and indicated that the end was near for North American suzerainty in the arms market.

Peru had initially tried to purchase high-performance aircraft from the United States. The Belaunde government (1963-1968) requested the U.S. to allow the sale of F-5 aircraft (which was designed for export and the U.S. was supplying on a grant basis to Ethiopia); the Peruvians were turned down.<sup>104</sup> The Belaunde government admittedly presented its case somewhat unconvincingly; the Peruvian President told the New York Times in an interview that the Peruvian military's desire to have the aircraft was "silly, but understandably human."<sup>105</sup> Despite the banana republic overtones, the aircraft purchase and especially the U.S. refusal to supply them had become a major domestic political issue in Peru.

Part of the reason the U.S. forbade the sale was because Washington felt that Peru's financial situation would not allow it; the Peruvians purchased new aircraft regardless, and ended up paying a higher cost at a higher interest rate for less aircraft than they wanted, from a supplier who could not provide the same level or quality of support as the U.S., and whose equipment was not easily

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<sup>104</sup> Luigi Einaudi, "U.S. Relations with the Peruvian Military", in Daniel A. Sharp, Ed., U.S. Foreign Policy and Peru (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), page 19.

<sup>105</sup> New York Times, 3 August 1967, 8:2.

integrated with the predominantly U.S.-made Peruvian inventory.

For its part, the U.S. lost an opportunity to make a sale, and was unable to prevent the introduction of high-performance aircraft into the region anyway. The only gain was perhaps the moral satisfaction of not catering to the whims of a minor ally and thereby sanctifying a potentially widespread demand for upgraded aircraft and other military inventories. By removing itself from the process, the U.S. also lost a great deal of leverage, opened the advanced weapons market to foreign competition, showed itself as an unreliable arms supplier, and suffered some loss of face and goodwill.<sup>106</sup>

The Peruvians made another request that year for an aircraft purchase which involved U.S. approval: Britain was selling off some obsolescent Canberra medium bombers which had U.S. engines. This request was also blocked for financial reasons (Peru was running a \$100 million deficit), and was accompanied with a threat to cut off aid to Peru due to an amendment to the FY1968 Bill, which required the U.S. to reduce economic aid by an amount equal to the funds spent by a developing nation on advanced weapons.<sup>107</sup>

The veto and the aid cutoff threat generated a furor in Peru. They were seen as political-economic paternalism;

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<sup>106</sup> The market for less sophisticated weapons had long been open to non-U.S. suppliers, although frequently with U.S. tacit or outright approval. Great Britain supplied 86.5 percent of the 237 aircraft transferred to South America between 1945 and 1955; of the 465 units transferred from 1955 to 1965, the U.S. share increased to 53.4 percent, the U.K.'s declined to 17.7 percent, and France provided 18.6 percent as a new competitor. The U.S. held greater sway over naval transfers, supplying 49 of the 74 warships transferred between 1945 and 1965. Varas, page 39. It should be pointed out that many of the aircraft of which the French and British divested themselves were of U.S. origin.

<sup>107</sup> "U.S. Halts Aid to Peru over Aircraft Deal," New York Times, 17 May 1968, page 1. Other amendments which interfered with arms sales were the 1962 Hickenlooper amendment, which cut off aid to countries that expropriated U.S.-owned property without adequate compensation, and the 1968 Pelly amendment, which restricted aid to countries that enforced the 200-mile territorial water limit.

since the Peruvian Congress had recently passed a bill which threatened expropriation of a Standard Oil subsidiary, it was also seen as pressure over sovereignty and control of a national resource.

The Peruvian purchase set an example which was quickly followed elsewhere on the continent. Argentina purchased AMX tanks, also from France, after experiencing similar difficulties when it tried to obtain modern tanks from the U.S. Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela also purchased advanced weapons from non-U.S. sources. U.S. military sales to the region diminished either by donor or recipient action, while purchases from other sources skyrocketed, as can be seen from the following table.

TABLE III  
ARMS IMPORTS BY SUPPLIER  
1964-1983

	U.S.	U.S.S.R.	West Europe
Argentina			
1964-73	169		114
1974-78	70		210
1979-83	80	10 (Poland)	1,615
Brazil			
1964-73	232		172
1974-78	160		480
1979-83	80		390
Chile			
1964-73	89		32
1974-78	110		120
1979-83	10		650
Peru			
1964-73	83		229
1974-78	90	650	180
1979-83	50	440	610

Source: World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers (ACDA Yearbooks)

Note: 1964-73 figures in 1973 U.S.\$; 1974-78 in 1979 U.S.\$; 1979-1983 in 1984 U.S.\$.

The arms purchase trend took on a more serious aspect when considered within the context of the breakdown of the U.S.-sponsored inter-American conflict resolution system. The states which were arming themselves were in many cases



those which had long-standing quarrels with neighbors (Argentina, Chile, Peru), at a time when the credibility of the principal hemispheric peacekeeping organization, the OAS, was in doubt due to U.S. unilateral actions and its consequent unpopularity in much of Latin America.

In addition, a new ideological bent had been added to the conflict equation; a series of political turnovers in the late 1960's and early 1970's temporarily placed radical left-wing governments in power in Chile, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia, while the Peronists returned to power in Argentina. These regimes were characterized by nationalism, instability and unpredictability, as well as by unsuccessful or simply catastrophic economic policies. The U.S. was less willing to provide arms to leftist nations whose policies and interests were frequently inimical to its own.<sup>108</sup>

It was not the leftists, but the extreme-right governments which followed in their wake that heightened tensions in the region, and may have increased the pace of interstate-conflict oriented armaments acquisition.<sup>109</sup> One of the largest purchases of this type was made by the Peruvian government in 1974, when the leftist military junta acquired several hundred tanks from the Soviet Union--very probably because of a perception that because of the extreme-rightist takeover in Chile it now faced a less friendly neighbor to the south.<sup>110</sup> This was the first major purchase of Soviet weapons by a South American nation.

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<sup>108</sup> For example, the U.S. had a number of disputes with Peru and Ecuador over the economic-strategic 200 nautical mile maritime boundary. U.S. legislation restricted aid to countries that enforced the limit by arresting or fining U.S. fishermen. Other U.S. legislation punished nations which expropriated U.S. citizens' property without adequate compensation.

<sup>109</sup> Peruvian relations with traditional antagonists Chile and Ecuador were remarkably cordial during the 1970-1973 period for the former and 1972-1975 timeframe for the latter.

<sup>110</sup> Chile's president Salvador Allende was overthrown in September 1973 by a far-rightist junta led by Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, allegedly backed by the U.S.

The Soviets had not sold weapons to the Chilean military during Socialist President Allende's term, probably to avoid antagonizing the right-wing military by highlighting the extent of Soviet support for the regime. An eventual Allende triumph which would turn Chile into a bona fide communist nation would vindicate the Soviets' "gradual revolution" outlook; Soviet moves which might precipitate a military coup were therefore avoided. The constraint was removed when Allende was overthrown; aid to a left-wing government in Peru might help to balance what the Soviets considered "a reactionary counteroffensive unprecedented in Latin American history... that was swallowing up one country after another."<sup>111</sup>

Peru followed up the purchase of Soviet tanks with the acquisition of two squadrons of Soviet Sukhoi Su-22 Fitter swing-wing fighter bombers in 1976, after the U.S. once again refused to sell Peru F-5's.<sup>112</sup> The Peruvian economy was in a shambles, but the Soviets offered excellent terms; it is unlikely that any European country could or would have matched the offer. In spite of this largess, no other South American nation purchased Soviet weapons.<sup>113</sup> Once the link was established, however, Peru continued to buy Soviet weapons; the army's ground and air inventory is heavily Sovietized, and the air force operates Soviet transports in addition to the fighter-bombers.

In spite of this heavy arms traffic, and perhaps in spite of Soviet hopes, the relationship between Peru and the

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<sup>111</sup> Robert S. Leiken, Soviet Strategy in Latin America (New York: Praeger, 1982), page 28.

<sup>112</sup> The United States did not cross the threshold of selling supersonic aircraft in Latin America until the Reagan administration sold F-16 fighters to Venezuela in 1981. Andrew J. Pierre, The Global Politics of Arms Sales (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pages 66-67.

<sup>113</sup> Personal contacts in Peru indicate some dissatisfaction with Soviet equipment, especially over spare parts availability, excessive political indoctrination of operator trainees, and maintainability. One source claimed that most of the Su-22's are grounded, with all priority going to counterinsurgency aircraft.

East Bloc remained principally commercial and did not progress politically or ideologically. Peru also continued to buy arms from other sources. The U.S. resumed arms sales to Peru in 1974 after a settlement of expropriation compensation, although the arms provided generally reflected the earlier counterinsurgency emphasis. European arms sales continued, especially to the Peruvian navy, which to date has not purchased Soviet equipment.

By 1977, Peru's military expenditures were being driven by the impending centennial of the War of the Pacific; revanchist popular sentiment in the country was running high. Although the government was internally unstable, and the economy was in ruins despite a major reorganization, arms purchases continued even when tensions with Chile cooled. The buying spree went on as the economy almost collapsed just before a transition to civilian power; only three months before the transfer, the junta bought an additional two squadrons of Su-22's.<sup>114</sup>

## 2. Economic Dimensions of the Military Buildup

Table IV illustrates regional military expenditure trends during this period.

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<sup>114</sup> Andrew J. Pierre, The Global Politics of Arms Sales (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), page 240.

TABLE IV  
MILITARY EXPENDITURES (ME) AS PERCENTAGE OF GDP AND  
OF FSE, AND ACTUAL MILITARY EXPENDITURES/ARMS IMPORTS

	% of GDP	% of FSE	ME/IMPORTS (millions of 1979# & 1983* U.S. dollars)
Argentina			
1971#	1.4	11.9	1189/NA
1973#	1.4	9.3	1324/NA
1975#	2.2	9.7	2218/52
1977#	2.4	16.9	2534/62
1979#	2.5	17.0	2641/660
1981*	3.8	14.8	2374/560
1982*	6.2	25.9	3620/303
1983*	4.6	14.9	2745/975
1985*			NA /140
Brazil			
1974*	1.2	6.7	1814/NA
1976*	1.2	5.6	1996/229
1978*	0.8	3.5	1556/285
1980*	0.7	2.8	1441/157
1982*	0.9	3.2	1917/31
1984*	0.8	2.8	1719/135
Chile			
1971#	2.4	8.5	402/NA
1973#	3.3	12.5	539/NA
1975*	4.8	13.1	700/35
1977*	4.0	11.9	680/93
1979*	3.6	12.0	713/251
1981*	3.8	11.9	828/347
1983*	4.2	12.7	759/90
Peru			
1971#	2.9	17.2	330/85
1973#	3.4	19.2	404/124
1975*	4.0	23.9	757/155
1977*	6.8	39.3	1291/488
1978*	5.5	32.0	969/336
1979*	3.2	21.4	621/90
1981*	4.2	23.7	924 (est.)
1983*	4.9	30.0	921 (est.)

Source: U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), 1981 and 1986 Yearbooks. Note that Peru's ME figure reflects pensions, while Chile's does not. Brazil's low level of expenditure probably reflects government ownership of military production facilities.

The chart indicates that real military spending had increased substantially in the years under evaluation, as had GDP; but the relative spending showed little if any increase since the pre-"arms race" days in the countries studied. The greatest jumps occurred, predictably, in Argentina during tensions with Chile and during the Falklands/Malvinas War; in Chile during tensions with Peru and Argentina; and in Peru during tensions with Chile and during the recrudescence of the internal war with Sendero Luminoso after 1980.



Another way to gauge whether or not the South American arms race was a dangerous anomaly or a historical trend is to compare the threat level perceived by the various countries on the continent. This is based on the rationale that a country would increase or upgrade its inventory in response to a perceived increase in requirements for national defense. It appears that the race did not originate from heightened threat perception, but it eventually raised tensions to the point that it became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In this context, going back to the early stages of the race, there is little indication that 1966-67 represented a period of heightened tension between Peru and either of its traditional antagonists, Chile and Ecuador. Therefore, the "race", at least in its initial period, was most likely due to the historical trends and an effort to modernize in accordance with the leadership's view of the country's status, rather than due to any fears of impending attack. Coupled with a changing international and domestic political situation in the region by the 1970's, this self-indulgence generated enough concern among neighbors to set off a costly multilateral race which eventually had aggressive or hostile overtones.

### 3. Indigenous Arms Production Capabilities

In addition to purchases from overseas suppliers, Argentina and Brazil have established large-scale arms industries of their own. While these industries are technologically far behind those in more developed countries and currently do not have the capability to meet even all the military requirements of their own nations, they represent a significant step toward reducing dependence on outside suppliers, integration of equipment, development of new technologies, cost reduction, enhancement of national self-esteem and prestige, and great potential for export earnings.

Brazil's industry is larger than Argentina's, and has

been more successful in the export market. The Brazilian defense industry was conceived, started, and encouraged as a conscious policy decision by the authoritarian regime which took over in 1964. It went through three phases of development (initial planning and technology acquisition, with low-level manufacture; development and coproduction with increasing sophistication; high technology military-industrial complex).<sup>115</sup> The decision to produce weapons no doubt received an added boost when the Carter administration reduced aid to Brazil due to charges of human rights violations, thereby overturning the "special relationship" which had been building for a century.

The Brazilians have made effective use of offset arrangements and licensing for technology transfer to build up their base. In addition to vehicles, small arms, and other low- to medium-technology systems, Brazilian concerns produce indigenous or licensed surface-to-surface, surface-to-air and air-to-air missiles, subsonic transport, trainer, and combat aircraft, submarine and surface ship coproduction, and are developing a supersonic jet aircraft with European consortia.<sup>116</sup>

Brazilian arms exports reached a high of \$500 million in 1984, up from \$60 million in 1975.<sup>117</sup> Customers included several Arab countries, but also Peru and Argentina. Brazil has become the world's largest exporter of light armored vehicles. According to Jane's Defence Weekly, the Brazilian

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<sup>115</sup> Clovis Brigagao, "The Brazilian Arms Industry," Journal of International Affairs Vol 40, No. 1, Summer, 1986. Pages 106-11.

<sup>116</sup> Anne Naylor Schwarz, "Arms Transfers and the Development of Second-Level Arms Industries" in David D. Louscher and Michael D. Salomone, Editors, Marketing Security Assistance (Lexington, Mass. and Toronto: Lexington Books, 1987), page 118. One of the systems the Brazilians are currently developing indigenously is a high-accuracy truck-launched 300-km range missile, the SS-300. Its accuracy reportedly will "preclude the use of a nuclear warhead." See "Brazil's Growing Missile Industry," Jane's Defence Weekly, Volume 9 No. 9, 5 March 1988, page 401.

<sup>117</sup> ACDA Yearbook, 1986, page 109. In constant 1983 dollars, the figures are \$104 million and \$483 million respectively.

Osorio tank is under serious consideration by the Saudi army as its new main battle tank.<sup>118</sup> The arms industry remains an economic and not a foreign policy asset vis-a-vis Latin America at the moment; although half of Brazil's military attaches are in South America, Brazil's weapons clout will probably be exercised with large-order cash customers such as Mideast nations.

Argentina's industry is on a smaller scale, and tends to be on a slightly less sophisticated technological level, but includes helicopters, counterinsurgency aircraft and surface-to-surface missiles as well as small arms, submarine coproduction (currently stalled), surface ships, and armored fighting vehicles.<sup>119</sup> Like Brazil's arms industry, it received strong motivation from the 1977 cutoff of U.S. aid for human rights violations.<sup>120</sup> The South Atlantic War also provided an object lesson in the perils of dependency on foreign sources, as well as the need to modernize.

Argentine arms exports have been sporadic (Argentine exports peaked at \$80 million in 1984, but most of that consisted of repayment in kind for Falklands War loans to Peru and Venezuela, and selling off of existing armament), and Argentina's general economic malaise has severely affected the arms industry.<sup>121</sup>

The indigenous arms industries can be two-edged swords; despite the benefits listed above, they also can become a very expensive liability; their ties to national sovereignty and necessarily to the military constituency makes it difficult to close them down if they do not produce efficiently or are unable to find a market for goods. In

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<sup>118</sup> "Saudi Shortlists Abrams, Osorio MBT's," Jane's Defence Weekly, Volume 9 No. 5, 6 February 1988, page 191

<sup>119</sup> Tracy E. deCourcy, "Countertrade and the Arms Trade in the 1980's," in Louscher & Salomone, pages 167-168.

<sup>120</sup> Pierre, page 243.

<sup>121</sup> ACDA Arms Transfers and Military Expenditures Yearbook 1986, page 110.

addition, the need to sustain the arms industry can lead to unsavory associations, such as Brazil's arms sales to Iraq and reputedly to Libya, which could compromise relations with other states and in themselves be a source of conflict.<sup>122</sup>

A great question in indigenous arms production remains the inclination to develop and build a nuclear weapon. Both Brazil and Argentina are assessed as technically capable of developing their own crude weapons; both theoretically have access to plutonium or enriched uranium, although Brazil far less so than Argentina. Nevertheless, Argentina's nuclear program is no longer under military direction, and although it has refused to sign the Tlatelolco Treaty and other non-proliferation pacts, Argentina has expressed an intention not to develop a nuclear weapon.<sup>123</sup>

The greater question is therefore why they would build such a weapon, and in what scenario they would consider its employment. The best rationale for either to build a bomb would be that the other had built one first; both nations agreed in late 1985 to preliminary measures for mutual inspection of facilities. While this is probably cosmetic at the moment, and though Brazil no doubt fears Argentine instability, measures of this sort provide a basis for eventual expansion of mutual security arrangements.<sup>124</sup>

There is little incentive for Argentina to use nuclear weapons against Great Britain, a nuclear power in its own right which has demonstrated willingness to use violence. Nor is there any major continental foe on the horizon against which Argentina would be likely to employ nuclear force or even coercion, especially with Brazil as a foil.

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<sup>122</sup> Ricardo Azumbuja Ant, "Menos Averigua Brasil, y Vende Armas," Instituto Peruano de Polemologia, Volume 2 No. 2, July-September 1987, page 11.

<sup>123</sup> Wynia, page 190.

<sup>124</sup> J. Selcher, "Brazil's Relations with Latin America," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, Volume 28 Number 2, Summer 1986, page 96.



#### 4. The Military Buildup Assessed

While the military buildup and the arms race have drawn enormous publicity as a possible prelude to or symptom of conflict, and as a disastrous self-indulgence for nations on the brink of bankruptcy, it could just as easily be explained for the countries on table III as within the bounds of historical armed forces spending levels. Latin American arms purchases and manning levels on both a relative and a real scale, are generally lower than those of almost any other region of the world, even including Africa (Oceania does spend less).<sup>125</sup>

On the other hand, the large-scale arms purchases of relatively sophisticated (in comparison to neighbors) weapons systems generate a momentum of their own due to the tensions they create. Neighboring states perceive arms purchases not as routine modernization, but as an upgraded threat, especially if there are any unresolved issues between the two states.

At the current time, it appears that the high-technology, big-ticket item arms race, at least for Peru and Argentina, two of the key participants, is well nigh over. Both Peruvian President Garcia and Argentine President Alfonsin have drastically cut military purchases and budgets.<sup>126</sup> While economic problems in the two countries are certainly part of the reason,<sup>127</sup> disenchantment with military

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<sup>125</sup> ACDA Yearbook 1986, pages 11 and 36.

<sup>126</sup> Peru's Garcia cut the purchase of the Mirage 2000 from 24 aircraft to twelve; Argentina's Alfonsin has considered putting several naval ships on the auction block, reduced the purchase/coproduction agreement of German submarines, and slashed operating time for the navy. In addition, Alfonsin's Treasury Secretary has told the military leadership that "he doesn't have the money" to pay off existing military debts with suppliers, and Alfonsin himself told the military chiefs of staff that he would back their modernization efforts "once the military had purged certain elements in its ranks." See "Alfonsin Looks to Safeguard Argentina's Democracy," Jane's Defence Weekly, Volume 9 Number 7, 20 February 1988, page 301.

<sup>127</sup> In Argentina, for example, 1,000 percent inflation, capital flight, and a \$50-billion foreign debt, with per capita income less than it had been fifteen years earlier,

solutions to international disagreements is also an avowed cause of their respective political platforms. Chile, on the other hand, apparently intends to continue purchasing arms.<sup>128</sup> Of importance in assessing the arms race is whether or not the nations which purchase the sophisticated weapons are capable of using them effectively; Libya, for example, had a huge inventory of combat aircraft but after a single engagement in 1981 the Libyan Arab Air Force did not confront U.S. combat aircraft with hostile intent again--including in the 1986 confrontation, when U.S. aircraft met with no airborne opposition during strikes against Libya. Could the same be said for the South American arsenals?

In Argentina's case, at least, the answer is undoubtedly no. The Argentines managed to employ many of their advanced weapons (high-performance jets, surface-to-surface missiles) effectively. In fact, it was the lower end of technology that failed--bomb fusing set incorrectly, raw recruits unable to face the rigors of weather and combat. The degree of technical proficiency attained by most major South American militaries (Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru at least) is high enough to allow cadre elements to use modern weapons.

Whether they can actually get a large number of troops to fight effectively remains unproven; the conscript army in the Falklands did not even have the minimum required training period for recruits by the time it was shipped to the islands, so it does not serve as a good example.<sup>129</sup> Historical evidence from earlier wars, although significantly out of date, indicates that as in most other armed forces,

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had made the economic situation "the cause of much despair." Wynia, page 144.

<sup>128</sup> In 1986, Admiral Jose Merino, commander in chief of the Chilean Navy and member of the junta, stated that, "If Garcia wants to reduce his armaments, fine. I need to increase mine and I am going to increase them." Quoted in Caretas, 2 November 1987, page 44.

<sup>129</sup> Train, page 37, asserts that the conscripts enter service in February and reach proficiency levels in June..

this is very much a function of leadership, motivation and the environment, rather than simply numbers and equipment.

Another consideration is whether the nations which have built up their military can in fact afford to go to war; For all its high-technology weapons, Argentina was almost certainly not planning to fight for the Malvinas, and the expense of the war was a staggering blow to an economy which was already on the ropes. The current economic crises in South America would preclude a war of any duration without extreme domestic hardship; the balance of power as it exists among the various nations today rules out any quick and easy victories by an aggressor looking for a "splendid little war."

#### B. TYPOLOGIES OF CONFLICT

As discussed in Chapter I, in order to determine the potential for interstate war in South America in the foreseeable future, it is necessary to determine the types and character of regional conflicts. The typology from the earlier chapter needs to be updated to meet the current world situation. Wolf Grabendorff provided a basic classification in 1981, which has since been updated.<sup>130</sup> Morris and Millan proposed the following typology based on Grabendorff's analysis:

- 1) "System-ideological"--democracy vs. dictatorship, communism vs. capitalism
- 2) Hegemonic struggles for influence--regional and major power attempts to project economic, social, or military power on other states
- 3) Territorial and border disputes--claims involving possession and sovereignty over land or water
- 4) Resource-competition disputes--disputes over verified or assumed resources in an area
- 5) Migration-refugee conflicts--result from demographic, economic, and political factors

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<sup>130</sup> Wolf Grabendorff, "Interstate Conflict Behavior and Regional Potential for Conflict in Latin America," Journal of Interamerican studies and World Affairs, August 1982, vol 24, No. 3, page 291. Morris and Millan updated the typology in 1983, and Walter Little in 1987.



Morris and Millan allow that most conflicts between states tend to fall into several of these categories, rather than any single one. Thus, Chile and Peru have a territorial/border dispute and a resource dispute as well.

Walter Little added categories of salience and persistence to determine if the conflicts have potential for actual war, and whether they are long-term or short-term. He contends that, the more longstanding a dispute, the more likely it is that it can be controlled; hemispheric flashpoints, he argues, tend to be recent and ideological, such as the confrontations between Nicaragua and her neighbors and Cuba and the U.S. This flies in the face of the South Atlantic War, until one considers that the Argentines did not see much potential for actual hostilities when they started the chain of events that set off the conflict.

Despite Little's sanguine retrospective, there has been tension close to war in the near past aside from the Falklands/Malvinas clash. The three recent major incidents have been Chile's tensions with Peru and Bolivia (although Bolivia's military participation would no doubt have been negligible once again) in 1977-1979; Chile's tensions with Argentina over the Beagle Channel in 1978; and the Peruvian-Ecuadorian clashes over the Cordillera del Cóndor (Condor Ridge) in 1981. While in retrospect they did not lead to war, at the time it seemed as though war was a distinct possibility.

#### 1. System/Ideological Conflicts

The governments in Guyana and Suriname have both undergone periods of leftist extremism or radicalism; Venezuela on the one hand and Brazil on the other have expressed concern. Discord between Venezuela and Guyana is focused much more on the territorial disputes between the states, however, although radicalism could be one of a series



of pretexts used to justify a Venezuelan move if it were contemplated.<sup>131</sup> The Guyanese, especially since the death of Forbes Burnham, have toned down their ties with Cuba and generally moved toward a more centrist political position.<sup>132</sup>

Brazil had expressed some concern over the radical regime of Desire Bouterse in Suriname, which has executed prominent dissidents and had ties with Cuba and Libya. Since the 1983 U.S. and Caribbean forces intervention in Grenada, however, Bouterse has significantly reduced the Cuban presence in his state, has downgraded Libyan connections, and has gradually moved toward a semblance of democratic rule in a socialist context.<sup>133</sup> A brutal internal repression against descendants of runaway slaves ("Bushnegroes") continues, however, and the Brazilians are no doubt keeping a watchful eye on their neighbor.<sup>134</sup> If Bouterse's excesses are resumed, Brazil may feel obligated to act in its role as a regional power in much the same way as the U.S. felt compelled to act in Grenada (making this as much a hegemonic as an ideological conflict).<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> In fact, Guyanese concern over a possible Venezuelan attempt at a military solution was seen as a possible inroad for Soviet and Cuban penetration. Leiken, page 69.

<sup>132</sup> Guyana still maintains a reportedly racist black regime which does not allow adequate representation of the large Asian population in the country. See Gary Brana-Shute, "Back to the Barracks? Five Years' 'Revo' in Suriname," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, Volume 28 No. 1, Spring 1986, page 94.

<sup>133</sup> Bouterse claims he still has "a talking relationship with Cuba;" the Libyans had promised \$100 million in aid in 1985, but failed to deliver. A large, though not prominent, Soviet presence remains. Brana-Shute, page 117. On Nov. 25, 1987, a three-party opposition coalition won a lopsided electoral victory (40 of 51 seats) in the first election held since the 1980 coup. Bouterse has said that "regardless of the results, the revolution will continue," and is not expected to yield full political power. "Suriname Voters Give a Strong Rebuff to Military," The New York Times, November 27, 1987, page 13.

<sup>134</sup> "Suriname War Is Devastating A Bush Society," New York Times, June 17 1987, page 1.

<sup>135</sup> Brazil has acted to increase its ties with Suriname in order to preempt closer ties with Cuba or Libya; since 1983, Brazil has provided military and economic aid to Bouterse's regime. J. Selcher, page 89.

At the moment there are no other direct confrontations of this type in South America, except perhaps as influenced by geopolitical thinking. Colombia has a dispute with Nicaragua over possession of the San Andres islands, but the conflict is unlikely to escalate, and has little relation to ideology.

Of greater concern are potential extremist regimes which might come to power in the near future; Peru faces an election in 1989 where a United Left (communist) candidate, Alfonso Barrantes, has a good chance of being elected. Neighboring extreme-right regimes such as Chile's would view this with concern.<sup>136</sup> Though far less likely, a final victory by Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in Peru or M19 in Colombia would be seen as a definite threat by neighboring states, including Brazil, Venezuela, and Chile.

While prospects for war seem dim at the moment, a possible far-Left regime in Peru could use widespread anti-Chilean feeling (see below) to bolster the ideological differences, and to co-opt a potentially hostile military. Peru would not want to take on Chile singlehandedly in a military contest given the current correlation of forces, and is unlikely to find allies in the near future; however, a confrontation between a far-Leftist Peruvian regime and Pinochet's Chile could provide an excellent opportunity for greatly increased Soviet aid to and penetration of Peru, even to the point where the correlation of forces could be tipped in Peru's favor.

Cuban ideological influence continues to surface in the form of guerrilla groups and other organizations which advocate the violent overthrow of South American governments.

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<sup>136</sup> At the very least, relations would be highly strained. The United Left maintains close ties with Moscow, which sees Pinochet as the bete noire of reactionary oppression in Latin America, and advocates the violent overthrow of his regime. Pinochet has little to offer the left except as he puts it, "la mano dura" (the hard hand). See Thomas C. Bruneau and Mary Mooney, A Political Transition in Chile? (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, 1987), page 14.

While Castro's prestige has been somewhat tarnished by events in recent years, he remains a powerful symbol for the South American left, and he still harbors ambitions which far exceed the limits of his island.

Cuba's principal toeholds in South America, Suriname and Guyana, have moved away from Castro; his principal threat now comes from the revolutionary movements in several countries. There are very probable ties between Revolutionary Left (MIR) in Chile, 19th March Armed Group (M19) in Colombia, Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) in Peru, and Havana. These groups are more likely to cause internal rather than interstate war unless one of them succeeds in toppling an established regime--an unlikely event.

## 2. Hegemonic/Influence Conflicts

### a. South American Hegemonism

Brazil's self-image of manifest destiny, or "grandeza", and Argentina's perception of its own role as a leader of the Spanish-speaking nations has led to some friction over "spheres of influence" (see section on geopolitics below). Political and economic control over the traditional buffer states, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia, and their resources is the prize; Argentina is conscious of Brazil's designs, and in the early 1980's voiced opposition to joint Brazilian-Paraguayan construction of the Itaipu hydroelectric dam project on the Parana/Plata system.

The Itaipu issue has been resolved, and the dam project is largely completed; although Argentina retains a long-term view, the current Argentine regime is beset with enough domestic problems, and its remembrance of war is near-term enough, that abstruse issues such as this would probably have little impact. Again, a sudden regime change in Buenos Aires could alter the situation drastically from Argentina's viewpoint.



Brazil, due to its economic and geographic enormity relative to its neighbors, would be a logical candidate to regional leadership if not outright hegemony. Overall, however, "Brazil has refused the roles of 1) continental hegemony (Colossus of the South), 2) vociferous Third World champion, or 3) U.S. regional surrogate or ally."<sup>137</sup> Brazil's relations with all its neighbors are excellent; while preferring bilateral relations, Brazil has also been active in regional groups, probably to ensure that it remains attuned to its Spanish-speaking neighbors' concerns. As pointed out earlier, Brazil's growing arms industry has not yet become a major political factor in Latin America, nor has Brazil made any significant overt interventory political or military moves toward her neighbors, other than unstable Suriname.<sup>138</sup>

b. Extrahemispheric Actors

Conflicts of this type in South America are not limited to the nations on the continent; they include external actors such as the United States and the Soviet Union, both of which have political and economic interests in the region. The risk is that South American states could get caught up in the competition between the superpowers.

Part of the process of political and economic diversification which the South American countries have attempted in the last two decades, with varying degrees of success, has involved establishing ties with the U.S.S.R., its satellites, and other communist countries. The range of these ties has extended from the ideological rapport of the Allende regime to the arms purchases by Peru, to the complete cutoff of relations by Pinochet.

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<sup>137</sup> Selcher, page 71.

<sup>138</sup> Brazil's influence on Paraguay has been driven by economic interests rather than any stated hegemonic principles. The economic integration of the two states may have some significance for conflict in the future, especially if there is major unrest in Paraguay after Stroessner.



The first South American state to establish diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. was Peronist Argentina in 1946; Brazil followed in 1959, and by 1971 Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela had followed suit. These ties were more often an expression of autonomy from the U.S. and a sop to local leftists than a prelude to significant economic or political links to a superpower; by and large, the Soviets have been kept at arm's length.

The economic side of relations with Moscow became important in Peru and Argentina during the 1970's. Largely due to its arms purchases, Peru currently owes the U.S.S.R. close to \$500 million; the Soviets have agreed to purchase Peruvian-built fishing craft in exchange for some debt reduction.<sup>139</sup> Argentina is a net creditor of the U.S.S.R.; grain and meat exports to the Soviets began during the U.S. grain embargo of 1975 (\$22 million) and grew to \$1.65 billion by 1984.<sup>140</sup> The Soviets have met with some difficulty in trying to pay the Argentines.

Moscow's attitude toward revolution was significantly different from Havana's; the "focos" sponsored by Castro received little support from the Soviets or their local stooges. The Soviets strongly supported "progressive" military regimes which combated focos, believing that the "new" development-oriented military was willing to move toward communism; the Allende government's experience with its military shook this faith, and increased Soviet reluctance to establish deep commitment in the region.

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<sup>139</sup> The Soviets have also contracted to build a \$600 million port in Peru in the near future. This may have strategic implications if basing rights for the Soviet fishing/research/intelligence-collection fleet are included. See Augusto Varas, "Soviet-Latin American Relations under the U.S. Regional Hegemony," in Augusto Varas, ed., Soviet-Latin American Relations in the 1980's (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987), page 38.

<sup>140</sup> Aldo C. Vacs, "From Hostility to Partnership: The New Character of Soviet-Argentine Relations," in Varas (1987), page 187. The trade with Argentina has included supplying Argentine breeder reactors with heavy water.

Soviet subversion in South America is carried out in more subtle fashion than through focos, employing such measures as indoctrination of personnel sent to study in the Soviet Union or its satellites, and Soviet and surrogate personnel in country. Overt ties between the Soviets and South American states, barring a bona fide communist party takeover, will remain cautious; the Soviets are very unlikely at the present time to be willing to take a major risk and make a large political, economic, and military investment in South America with little hope of return in the foreseeable future. Even a communist regime will still be kept at a distance, at least until the local military's political stance and threshold of tolerance are made clear.

Establishment of a Soviet military presence in South America would represent a significant setback for the U.S., but could also frighten neighboring states and lead to U.S. military action. Any such move by the Soviets would have to be carefully weighed in terms of accomplishments of strategic objectives.<sup>141</sup>

Of equal importance, the doctrines of the leftist military movements of the 1970's had strong nationalist, anti-dependency overtones; while the Peruvians, for example, purchased Soviet weapons (and the Argentines sold grain to the U.S.S.R), they were unwilling to trade U.S. for Soviet "hegemonism." The more conservative military of today is even less likely to accept such a situation. The far more well-established national character and armed forces of South America make the prospect of an expeditionary force similar to the one in Angola, or an extremely large and dominant Cuban presence such as in Nicaragua, difficult to imagine.

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<sup>141</sup> Jaime Suchlicki, "Soviet Policy in Latin America: Implications for the United States", in Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, Volume 29 No. 1, Spring 1987, page 39. Witness also Moscow's extreme reluctance to get caught in the middle of the confrontation between nominal ally Libya and the U.S. in a theater much closer to home.

The Soviets would profit more, at less expense, by playing on the U.S.-dependency theme and weakening political, economic, and military-strategic South American links with the U.S. wherever possible than by attempting to set up an alternate economic and military structure of their own.

The prospects for a sudden, direct, ideologically motivated confrontation between the superpowers in South America are therefore negligible under existing circumstances, since Moscow lacks both the support from within and the commitment it must provide itself. The Soviets would probably avoid of their own accord a relationship, with any Iberian South American country, which would be pervasive enough to generate (or to place them in the midst of) a military confrontation with the U.S.<sup>142</sup> While this limits Moscow's active role for increased penetration in the area, the U.S.S.R. will be quick to seize any opportunity that it can use for the discomfiture of U.S. policy and standing in the region without entailing serious confrontation or expenditure.

### 3. Territorial and Border Disputes

This type of conflict is one of the most prevalent and persistent in South America (for its origins see chapter I).<sup>143</sup> The most serious ongoing disputes of this sort are between Argentina and the United Kingdom, Ecuador and Peru, Bolivia-Peru-Chile, Colombia and Nicaragua, Colombia and Venezuela, and Guyana and Venezuela. Of these, the latter two are unlikely to lead to any military conflict (all involved are pledged to resolve the disputes peacefully) but

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<sup>142</sup> The Soviets refer to U.S. ability to exert influence in the area as "geographic fatalism." Suchlicki, page 25.

<sup>143</sup> Morris and Millan (page 4) identify 28 of these in South America. Child (1985, page 13) separates border and territorial conflicts into separate categories; border conflicts result from the "strains and tensions that seem to emerge almost inevitably when two sovereignties meet at a frontier," while territorial conflicts are those in the more generally understood category of disputes over the possession and sovereign rights of portions of the earth's surface.



could become an additional complicating factor if relations deteriorated over more pressing migration, resource, or ideological problems among the states.

The Argentine-United Kingdom conflict was discussed in greater detail in the introduction. While the territorial aspect has been the most persistent in this conflict over the years, it is no longer as significant a barrier to its overall resolution as are more complicated resource, political-ideological, and population issues.

The dispute between Peru and Ecuador centers on the same territory which the two nations fought over in 1941. Ecuador has denounced the 1942 Rio Treaty, and persists in its demands on access to the Amazon headwaters and the Zarumilla-Tumbes area.

A 1981 incident actually led to fighting along the poorly marked border, with some casualties. Nationalist agitation added to military restiveness in newly elected civilian governments in both countries, and consequent desire by the respective presidents to show that they were capable of firm action, led to a clash. Peru responded by calling up reserves and moving forces north. While Ecuador has used its oil revenue to purchase a respectable inventory, Peru remains an overwhelming opponent in any bilateral action.<sup>144</sup>

The emotionalism displayed over this dispute on both sides of the border, and the relative enormity of the claim (it would double Ecuador's present size) make it highly unlikely that it will be resolved or will fade away.<sup>145</sup> The ease with which Peru has historically dealt with Ecuador militarily make this border dispute particularly troublesome, since in the past it has provided the Peruvian military and

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<sup>144</sup> Varas (1985), page 98.

<sup>145</sup> For the Ecuadorians, the Amazon "holds a special place in the national consciousness.... Demands for its restitution became a perennial theme of Ecuadorian political debate." David W. Schodt, Ecuador: An Andean Enigma (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), page 54.



Peruvian governments opportunities for quick and easy victories.<sup>146</sup>

Nevertheless, Peruvian President Garcia has gone some way toward attempting to resolve the issue, with his foreign minister visiting Ecuador in 1986--the first time since before the 1941 war.

Bolivia has persisted in its desire for an outlet to the sea since the Chileans seized Bolivia's coast in 1880. In the past, Chile repeatedly played Bolivia and Peru against one another; more recently, it has simply failed to provide Bolivia with any acceptable option for access to the sea. For the Chileans, this is as much a hegemony/influence issue as a territorial one; Bolivia is irretrievably linked to Chilean interests as long as her principal access to the sea is through Chile. For Bolivia, the issue is one of resources as well as territory. Bolivia broke relations with Chile over both resources and boundaries from 1962 to 1975, and over the coastal access issue from 1978 to 1983. Despite the rupture in relations, much of Bolivia's trade still uses Chilean ports, and close economic ties between the two states, added to Chile's overwhelming military superiority, make any prospect of a bilateral war difficult to imagine.

While the territorial issue between Chile and Peru was technically settled in 1929, anti-Chilean feeling continues to run high. Chile's right-wing 1973 coup gave Peru's left-wing government an incentive to increase its armament. By 1977, with the centennial of the War of the Pacific approaching, nationalist tensions on both sides, plus the everlasting Bolivian dream of access to the sea, reached a crescendo. In addition to the arms race, Chilean diplomatic and military personnel were expelled from Peru for

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<sup>146</sup> The largest concentration of Peruvian forces is along the Zarumilla sector of the border with Ecuador; Ecuador in turn deploys both of its mechanized brigades and four of its six divisions in the southern region. English, pages 252 and 401. Although English points out that Ecuador has upgraded its inventory and training since the oil boom, its military is still no match for Peru.

spying (a Peruvian soldier was executed for treason in the affair), and the Peruvian ambassador to Chile was recalled.

Trilateral military talks among the participants allowed for reduction of tension and for confidence-building measures. The centennial passed without incident, and more cordial relations became the rule with the return of civilian rule to Peru in 1980.<sup>147</sup> The current Peruvian government, while no friend of Pinochet's, has continued efforts to reduce tensions along the border.

The dispute between Colombia and Nicaragua centers on the San Andres Islands in the Caribbean. When the Sandinistas came to power in 1979, (despite Colombian support for their cause during the Nicaraguan Revolutionary War) they resurrected claims to the islands, which had been settled by U.S. arbitration in Colombia's favor in 1929. Colombia's president Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala secretly reinforced the islands with troops and aircraft, then disclosed the fact to deter aggression.<sup>148</sup> Nicaragua's geographic proximity is offset by its military weakness vis-a-vis Colombia, and by U.S. repugnance toward the Sandinista regime, which would make U.S. support for Colombia likely in any military confrontation.

One major boundary dispute which threatened regional peace has been resolved. Differences between Argentina and Chile over three islands in the Beagle Channel led in 1978 to the breaking of relations between the states, mobilization of the Chilean and Argentine armies, and blackouts in Buenos Aires. The two states had seemingly developed an excellent rapport after the overthrow of Peron's widow and her advisor in 1976, but when Argentina refused to accept the result of British mediation in 1978 relations deteriorated immediately. A papal offer of mediation was tendered; both antagonists agreed to settle their differences peacefully. Relations

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<sup>147</sup> Merrill, page 182.

<sup>148</sup> Calvert, page 18.

between the two states remained uneven, especially when Chile's support for Argentina in the South Atlantic War proved ambiguous.

Papal mediation decisions were accepted by Chile and resoundingly approved in an Argentine referendum in 1984, definitively settling the issue, although Argentine ultranationalists remain displeased.<sup>149</sup> This dispute had hegemonic and resource overtones which actually overrode the territorial aspect; however, the papally mediated boundary provided a compromise which resolved these issues, at least for the moment, and thereby removed a medium in which other disputes could develop. The surprising willingness of both sides to reach an agreement based on compromise also bodes well for future integrationist solutions to problems.

#### 4. Resource Conflicts

This type of conflict has been around for over a century in South America; it arguably led to the War of the Triple Alliance, and certainly was the driving factor behind Chile's actions in the War of the Pacific. Suspected oil deposits also played a role in the Chaco War. The issue remains of central importance at a time when control of resources can be critical for the weakened economies of the continent.

One of the potential threat areas in this respect is the "Seventh Continent," Antarctica; Peter Beck writes<sup>150</sup>,

Indeed, some even depict the continent as a future "casus belli." The early 1980's... demonstrated an increased tendency by governments to refer to the Antarctic not only as an international problem, but also as a potential crisis point.

Chile and Argentina have conflicting territorial claims, and both have conflicts with British claims. The

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<sup>149</sup> Merrill, page 201. Garrett (page 104) claims that a majority of Argentines consider it resolved and want to get on with more pressing issues.

<sup>150</sup> Peter J. Beck, The International Politics of Antarctica, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), page 309.



boundary disputes over a barren wasteland are relatively meaningless unless one considers the resource issues involved; the squid and krill (a small shrimp with a high protein content) fisheries in southern waters have made the Falklands the busiest shipping area in the Southern Hemisphere for several weeks each year.<sup>151</sup> In addition, there are reports of oil and other mineral resources on the continental shelf.<sup>152</sup>

Chile and Argentina both maintain research stations in Antarctica; they have deliberately settled families at the stations to prove that they have "inhabited" the areas they claim (the first baby born in Antarctica was Argentine).<sup>153</sup> Although Argentine forces are the only ones to have allegedly fired shots in anger in Antarctica (against the British in 1952), they did not carry out any hostile actions against British stations in their vicinity during the South Atlantic War.<sup>154</sup>

The entire dispute over the Antarctic has been shelved since 1961, when the United Nations-sponsored 1959 Antarctic Treaty was ratified. According to Article IV of the treaty, all territorial claims will be held in abeyance for the duration of the treaty, and no further claims made while it is extant can be recognized. The treaty does not

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<sup>151</sup> Luis H. Mericq, Antarctica: Chile's Claim (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1987), page 23.

<sup>152</sup> Deborah Shapley, The Seventh Continent: Antarctica in a Resource Age (Washington D.C.: Resources for the Future, 1985), page 124.

<sup>153</sup> The child was born in January 1978 at the Argentine base in Esperanza. In similar efforts to establish a presence, Chile sent six families to its Teniente Marsh base in 1984. Beck, page 129.

<sup>154</sup> A British inspection team (Article VII states that all installations are open to inspection at any time) in March 1982 found 23 military personnel, only two of whom were doing scientific research, at the Argentine San Martin base; Chilean stations are about the same. This leaves open the question of whether the bases are maintained for scientific or strategic reasons. Beck, page 72. Beck also provides a full description of the 1952 incident on pages 34 and 35; Argentina admitted its local commander had overstepped his authority.



rule on the legitimacy of the claims; it is a non-solution, simply a peace-keeping measure which freezes them.

The treaty will be up for revision in 1991; in the current climate of relations between Argentina and Chile after peaceful resolution of the Beagle Channel dispute, there are no indications that either party will call for an end to the treaty or for final resolution of territorial claims in Antarctica.<sup>155</sup> Complicating that issue would be the presence of numerous other nations on Antarctica, some of which--including the U.S.--do not recognize the validity of territorial claims. Third World attitudes toward keeping Antarctica as a world resource would tend to support this stance rather than any strict sovereignty claims.<sup>156</sup>

In addition to the political undesirability of a war at this time, military operations in such a remote and inhospitable region would be difficult, expensive, and hazardous simply from the weather and terrain. The possibility of a military conflict over resources and ground space in Antarctica itself is therefore limited in the foreseeable future. A more likely scenario for a clash could involve patrol vessels confronting each other over fishing rights--especially British and Argentine units; however, the reinforced British presence in the region would make it difficult for the Argentines, with their weakened naval strength, to present a credible opponent.

Another Southern Cone conflict which bears on resources is between Chile and Argentina in Patagonia. While the boundary issue is settled in the region, the Argentines worry about large numbers of Chilean illegal immigrants to the area. Patagonia is the source for much of Argentina's

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<sup>155</sup> Although the settlement specifically did not address the Antarctic claims that would result from extending the agreed-upon boundary southward.

<sup>156</sup> Chilean author Luis Mericq (page 43) proposes a solution between "internationalization" and the present Antarctic Treaty System, allowing eventual association to nations with demonstrated interest and experience in the region.

petroleum, and Buenos Aires finds the presence of numerous potentially hostile aliens in the thinly-populated but strategic zone disturbing. This became something of an issue in the wake of allegations that Chile had collaborated with the British in the far south; however, it is unlikely that this issue will cause a major rift between the two nations in the foreseeable future. Its complicated links with demographics illustrate the difficulty of defining the limits and causes of conflict in South America.

#### 5. Demographic Conflicts

Aside from the Chilean-Argentine demographic conflict in Patagonia, there is also a demographic dispute between Colombia and Venezuela which heats up periodically. Poor Colombians for several years illegally immigrated to Venezuela, which had a more robust legal economy than Colombia; the influx of Colombians was at first beneficial for both sides, since Venezuela needed the cheap labor and the departure of the Colombians from their home country relieved population and unemployment pressures. When oil prices went down in the early 1980's, and the Venezuelan economy staggered, the Colombians became redundant and were seen as a major economic burden. Reports of ill-treatment and mass deportation of Colombians by Venezuela resulted in demonstrations and acts of violence against Venezuelans in Colombia. Despite flareups in popular opinion, the democratic regimes in Colombia and Venezuela are committed to peaceful resolution of any disputes.

Similarly, Brazil's heavy outward flow of cross-border migration toward its buffer states (Paraguay, Bolivia, Uruguay) and French Guiana are not likely to cause military clashes, if only due to Brazil's economic and military preponderance vis-a-vis the smaller states.<sup>157</sup> Franco-

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<sup>157</sup> Selcher (page 93) believes that "although binational cooperation, rather than confrontation, is the most probable outcome, still some disagreements are likely to occur."

Brazilian ties would probably allow for peaceful resolution of any conflicts over Guiana.

#### 6. Geopolitics: The Critical Link?

The geopolitical approach to politics perceives the state as "a living organism, which requires living space, resources, and a purpose; the state also has a life cycle in which it is created, matures, declines, and finally disappears."<sup>158</sup> Its essential elements include its people (number, strength, culture), its territory (size, location, minerals and topography), and its sovereignty (its freedom to act in its own best interests).<sup>159</sup> The organic viewpoint frequently presents the relationship between two states as competitive whenever they come into contact.

##### a. Aggressive Geopolitics

Geopolitical thinking was initially the preserve of European political philosophers who went into disfavor in the West after the fall of Fascism; nevertheless, in South America, especially among right-wing military elements, it found a new home. The organic concept was expanded to include internal disorders that weakened and threatened the state, and therefore had to be extirpated. Since survival of the state was crucial to all its components, the individual was subordinated to the whole. Geopolitics dovetailed nicely with authoritarianism and the concept of the national security developmentalist state.

The zenith of geopolitical thinking in terms of the national security state was reached in the mid-1970's, when conservative military regimes dominated almost all of South America. Brazil, Chile and Argentina had fairly well-developed schools of thought on the matter, each implementing the philosophy in its own way. The concept of sovereignty/autarchy, which is predicated on reduced dependence, provided an excellent rationale for indigenous

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<sup>158</sup> Child, page 20.

<sup>159</sup> Varas (1985), page 16.

arms production and diversification of arms sources. The strong nationalist tendencies implicit in geopolitics favored aggressive action against neighboring states, especially if a resource conflict was involved. The need to "extirpate malignant growths" justified extraordinary measures for dealing with internal subversion, real or imagined. While no causal link can be developed between the national security state and aggressive geopolitical thinking in South America, the South Atlantic War and all three of the major recent interstate incidents involved geopolitically-oriented armed forces.<sup>160</sup>

Brazil's brand of geopolitics is embodied in the concept of "grandeza," which sees Brazil as destined to become the next superpower. This has clear geopolitical implications for Brazil and also for its neighbors, who will then be in the uncomfortable position of being next to a superpower. The traditional Argentine geopolitical perception is that Argentina's destiny of greatness has been frustrated repeatedly by external forces and their internal manifestations; Brazil represents a rival in the area, trying to deprive Argentina of her rightful place as leader of Iberian America. Brazil has thus far not shown any signs of planning to play that role forcefully or soon.

Chile's claim over the Beagle Channel islands also represented a threat to Argentine aspirations of undisputed mastery over the South Atlantic. Argentine geopoliticians feel that Chile belongs in the Pacific, and Argentina in the Atlantic; Chilean claims were seen as contesting Argentine strategic control.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Jack Child, "Geopolitical Thinking," unpublished paper, for inclusion in forthcoming book, Louis W. Goodman and Juan Riel, eds., Civil Military Relations in Latin America: The Military and Power, c. August 1987.

<sup>161</sup> James L. Garrett, "The Beagle Channel: Confrontation and Negotiation in the Southern Cone," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, Volume 27 Number 3, Fall 1985, page 85.



The last remaining dictator who came to power in South America in the 1970's is Chile's Augusto Pinochet, who is himself an avid geopolitician.<sup>162</sup> Chilean geopolitical perspectives center on retention of the gains of the War of the Pacific, and on exploiting the resources which the sea provides Chile. The nation is surrounded by hostile neighbors, and the principle of "discontinuous borders" must be considered when seeking allies; Brazil, which has no border with Chile but shares a border with Argentina, is an ideal ally.<sup>163</sup> The feeling is not mutual though, and Brazil prefers to keep its distance.<sup>164</sup>

While the military governments in Brazil, Peru, and Argentina have been replaced by civilians, there is recurrent instability in those countries, and there is willingness among sectors of the military to return to power if the situation allows or "demands" it. Aggressive geopolitical thinking could again become a significant factor in conflict generation if the current economic malaise worsens and competition for scarce resources is perceived as critical for national survival.

b. Integrationism: The Case of Brazil

Nevertheless, the seemingly strong grip which the geopolitically-oriented military governments exerted on South America has been broken for the moment, to be replaced by its other, brighter aspects: internal and integrationist geopolitics. In the former aspect, geopolitics involves the intelligent development, exploitation and utilization of national territory; in the latter, it espouses joint development of frontiers and pooling of resources. Brazil

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<sup>162</sup> Sample quote (from 1978): "However much one wants to think of law as an equalizing element among categories of nations, one always confronts the hard reality that the strongest country... has an advantage in the litigation of frontiers." Garrett, page 84.

<sup>163</sup> Child (1985), pages 52-55.

<sup>164</sup> Itamaraty (the Brazilian Foreign Ministry) maintains only "proper" relations with Pinochet. Selcher, page 71.

has been practicing the latter aspect even since its national security state phase, as noted by the joint development project with Paraguay at Itaipu.<sup>165</sup>

### C. THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

After its failures in 1979, when the OAS rejected a U.S. request to send a multinational peacekeeping mission to Nicaragua, and in 1982 when it proved unable to take effective action to avert the South Atlantic War, the credibility of the organization has been seriously damaged. Ad hoc organizations such as the Contadora Group and the Arias Peace Plan have received much attention; however, efforts made in recent years at establishing long-term, general arms limitation agreements, and permanent interamerican organizations with conflict control functions, have produced few substantive results. South American countries are apparently most reluctant to limit their options by creating a regional supranational entity with obligational capability.

#### 1. Arms Limitation Agreements

Two of the most prominent arms control agreements in recent years include the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Ayacucho Declaration.

##### a. The Treaty of Tlatelolco

Even before the Non-Proliferation Treaty was opened for signing in July 1968, several Latin American nations came up with a regional treaty of their own. The treaty included provisions for ensuring compliance; it was signed by a number of countries including the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. from 1967 to 1978. Argentina is the only regional country which has not ratified the treaty; Brazil and Chile have reservations in their ratifications which keep the treaty from entering into force. In addition, Brazil and Argentina take Article 18 of the treaty to mean that

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<sup>165</sup> Child, page 37.

"peaceful nuclear explosions are allowed."<sup>166</sup> Thus, the treaty fails to obtain a viable commitment from precisely those nations which are most likely to have the capability and the willingness to build or develop a nuclear weapon.

b. The Ayacucho Declaration

In 1974, the Peruvian revolutionary military government called for a meeting of several countries in the region to discuss arms reduction and confidence-building measures. A joint declaration was signed in the Peruvian city of Ayacucho in December 1974 by Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela; signatories agreed to "promote and support the building of a lasting order of peace and cooperation," to create a climate of limited arms sales, and to stop buying offensive weapons.

Political realities quickly showed the limitations of the "Spirit of Ayacucho," however; the same month the declaration was signed, Peru's acquisition of 250 Soviet T-55 tanks was revealed, with obvious consequences to its neighbors' posture on disarmament. In addition, Brazil's non-participation despite being invited to attend was considered a key failure.

Despite these obvious weaknesses, further attempts to expand the spirit of Ayacucho were made; Peruvian, Bolivian and Chilean border region military commanders agreed to meet regularly in the late 1970's to avoid any accidental confrontations. These meetings have met with mixed success, but are still important in preventing individual miscalculations or irrationality by an isolated actor. Nevertheless, in his evaluation of the Ayacucho Declaration participants, Max G. Manwaring finds that despite the disarmament interest of the 1970's, "there has been a general proliferation of military capability, a diffusion of

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<sup>166</sup> Michael A. Morris and Martin Slann, "Proliferation of Weaponry and Technology," in Morris and Millan, pages 141-142.

power among a growing number of states, and thus a general weakening of security."<sup>167</sup>

## 2. The Role of Regional Organizations

The Antarctic Treaty Organization, perhaps due to its unique and narrow geographic focus and deferred (or non-) solution outlook has been a success story for almost thirty years. In addition, several attempts have been made since the early 1970's to form other organizations which could provide conflict control functions among regional nations. A brief overview of some of these efforts is provided.

### a. SELA

The Latin American Economic System (Sistema Economico Latinoamericano, or SELA) was the brainchild of Venezuela's activist president Carlos Andres Perez, who had ambitions of Third World leadership; the implications of SELA went far beyond economics and were highly politicized.<sup>168</sup> Among the prominent features of the 1975 charter for the organization were the exclusion of the United States and the inclusion of Cuba. Every South American nation was a member. The organization is made up of three organs: the Latin American Council, the Secretariat, and the Action Committees.

The military regimes in Brazil, Argentina, and Chile expressed opposition to any moves which might make the group a supranational organization, which depoliticized the organization to some extent. It has retained some features which could make it helpful in conflict control, chiefly by providing a forum for dialogue and multilateral approaches to problem solving.

SELA's brightest moment in conflict control came during the Falklands/Malvinas conflict, when the Assembly

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<sup>167</sup> Max Manwaring, "Monitoring Latin American Arms Control Agreements," in Morris and Millan, eds., page 170.

<sup>168</sup> John D. Martz, "Venezuelan Foreign Policy and the Role of Political Parties," in Heraldo Muñoz and Joseph S. Tulchin, eds., Latin American Nations in World Politics (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984), page 137. The charter simply called for cooperating in economic and social matters, and providing a forum for consultation.



passed a resolution (to which Chile, Colombia, and the virtually all of the Western Hemisphere Anglophone states dissented) condemning Great Britain and the U.S.-EEC embargo against Argentina. Even this display of (broken) solidarity accomplished nothing; economic and military aid to Argentina was very much on a bilateral rather than multilateral--much less Latin American--basis. SELA has no real power other than moral suasion to enforce compliance, however, and the mistrust, differences, and disputes that characterize Latin American relationships make attempts at conflict resolution problematic. SELA might become more effective if it were incorporated or associated with the OAS system.<sup>169</sup>

b. The Andean Pact

Members of the Andean Pact (Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Colombia, and Venezuela) drew up a treaty creating a Court of Justice of the Cartagena Agreement in 1979, with compulsory jurisdiction; however, the treaty has to date not been ratified by the member states.

3. Implications

The failure of the South American states to create a regional organization which could replace the OAS, empowered to limit, control, or resolve conflict or conflict-producing situations through an enforceable mandate does not point to an increased willingness on the part of any of the states to engage in hostile military action. Rather, it indicates that fears of neighbors' internal stability (a sudden change of governments could mean a reversal of foreign policy) and historical distrust or antagonism toward nations in the region (the United States among them) are still alive.

It also shows that the various nations are not satisfied with the solutions provided by earlier organizations, such as the OAS or the United Nations. Belonging to any such organization would also diminish a

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<sup>169</sup> Carlos Moneta, "The Latin American Economic System as a Mechanism to Control Conflicts," in Morris and Millan, eds., page 103.

state's flexibility and, to a certain extent, its sovereignty; the current political mainstream in South America no doubt places this latter principle above that of the rule of international law as decided by outside parties.

The current integrationist climate has produced conflict-resolution bodies such as the Contadora Group for other areas; whether this would work in the much larger geographic, demographic, and military scale of South America is doubtful. At the same time, integrationism and the democratic character of the governments in South America (only Chile and Paraguay still have full dictatorships) will ease bilateral actions that reduce conflict. The Alfonsín and García governments have both demonstrated that they are serious about peace, and their efforts to that end will continue.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Through such events as the Beagle Channel dispute resolution (Argentina) and the efforts to improve relations with Ecuador, to which Peru had traditionally given short shrift.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

### A. PROSPECTS FOR CONFLICT

#### 1. Possible Scenarios

As examined in this thesis, the roots of conflict in South America go back in many cases for over a century; they are, in Little's typology, persistent and often salient. Many of them are rooted in factors which do not present any hope of a rational, much less a near-term, solution. Recent increases in warfighting capability in terms of arsenals, troop deployments, infrastructure, and demographics, in conjunction with an apparent reduction in conflict control mechanisms, in some analysts' opinion make the outbreak of war in South America seem inevitable.

Nevertheless, from a historical and a contemporary perspective, the present situation in South America is not conducive to the outbreak of interstate war as defined earlier. Study of the few South American wars which have taken place over the years indicates that the aggressor was generally in a favorable economic situation, the war or initial aggression had popular support in the perpetrating state during the early stages, and the initiator enjoyed at least a momentary substantial military advantage in the theater of operations. Considering the current economic straits and the relative military balance on the continent today, these three criteria would be hard to meet.

The most likely exception would be a renewed outbreak of armed violence between Peru and Ecuador, at least in the form of low-intensity conflict, where at least two of those three criteria could be met. This possibility is diminished by the current Peruvian regime's activist foreign policy, which is driven by President Garcia's desire to appear as a conciliatory Third World statesman, rather than a belligerent nationalist leader. The existence of tensions in the area

provides the military with a mission and a raison d'etre; Garcia obviously realizes that a diminution of tension would also diminish the military's importance.

The Peruvian President's internal subversion problems are apparently driven just as much by indiscriminate extremists (Shining Path) as they are by Cuban-inspired terrorists (MRTA) interested in weakening progressive democracy. This low-intensity conflict has reached a point where Garcia cannot do without the military, and as a result it has by and large been fought on the armed forces' terms rather than the government's.

Conflict involving Argentina is unlikely due to the recency and totality of the defeat in the South Atlantic War, and the unpopularity of the war and of military leadership in its aftermath. Although the Thatcher government so far has proven unwilling to negotiate in a constructive fashion, and Alfonsin cannot be reelected under the present constitution, the Argentines must realize the situation cannot be resolved in their favor through continued military action.

The Argentine military probably recognizes that due to economic pressure alone the British will eventually have to reach some kind of agreement on the Falklands-Malvinas; in the interim, Her Majesty's Government are building what amounts to an excellent future Argentine naval/military facility on the islands which will enable Argentina to come closer to her dream of controlling the far South Atlantic.

The greatest threat in the area at this time is from the political and military momentum which could build up in Argentina following even a minor confrontation between British and Argentine elements--such as fishing or research vessels--operating in the disputed zone. Given the policy moves demonstrated in the recent past, the current government would probably attempt to minimize the effect of any such clash; however, other groups inside Argentina could



use any conciliatory action by the government to accuse it of pusillanimity or capitulationism.

Even if a more belligerent group manages to obtain political control in Argentina, though, it will have a very difficult time convincing the nation to go to war again. Recent Gallup studies show a large proportion of Argentines consider theirs to be the country working hardest for peace in Latin America.<sup>171</sup>

## 2. Driving Forces

The eventual establishment of internal stability through subordination of the military to democratic civilian rule remains the central issue in this regard for most nations. An autarkic military could decide for reasons of its own, including simply to demonstrate its power vis-a-vis the civilian government, to carry out against a neighboring state an action which could well be irreversible; the Peruvian military came just short of doing this against Ecuador in 1981.

The current geopolitical orientation of the military leadership in Argentina, Chile, and Peru, coupled with a perceived need by an autonomous military or by a putschist regime seeking legitimacy, could create conditions leading to a confrontation. Aggressive nationalism is more easily courted and more philosophically accessible to geopolitical thinkers than regional integration.

The internal security role emphasized in past U.S. training<sup>172</sup>, and reinforced by domestic necessity, has moved the South American military even closer to politics; as long as the insurgencies are not contained in Peru and Colombia at least, the military will perforce remain an important factor due to their influence on the domestic front. Paradoxically,

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<sup>171</sup> See Selcher, page 94.

<sup>172</sup> Recent U.S. joint operations and exercises, such as Operation Condor in Peru and Bolivia, have concentrated on drug eradication, an internal security problem with implications for U.S. security.

if and when the guerrilla threat is eliminated, this will leave a large military which will have external security as its chief mission, and may seek ways of reminding the government that it is still required in order to cope with threats from abroad.

The concept that arms control agreements and conflict-resolving organizations, and U.S. involvement in them, are a viable solution is problematic due not only to nationalist tendencies and the desire to retain flexibility, but also to the occasional irrationality or the non-governmental factors which could trigger a major military confrontation, such as the ones which served as catalysts for the Peruvian-Colombian clashes and to a lesser extent the South Atlantic War.<sup>173</sup> These triggers admittedly belie the existence of deep-rooted conflicts and tensions, which such organizations or agreements might reduce; conflict-control mechanisms have been established on a bilateral basis (for example on the Peru-Chile border through regular military-to-military talks) precisely to avoid the eventuality of independent action by isolated groups.

Still, the tide of events might preclude the application of constraints which would allow rational settlement. This is especially true in those regimes which, due to internal instability, are incapable of controlling a situation or of exercising sufficient freedom of movement to forestall the outbreak of war.

The bottom line is that the current democratic governments, with their integrationist and conciliatory

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<sup>173</sup> The Leticia affair, for example, was begun by civilians, and the Peruvian government felt it could not back down or it could fall from power. The South Atlantic War was similar in some respects, (misunderstandings when civilians planted an Argentine flag on South Georgia) but the Junta (Adm. Anaya) did not want to back down, and took a calculated risk based on an incorrect assessment of the political and military situation in Britain. In the current situation, opportunistic elements in the military or the opposition in both Peru and Argentina could intentionally place the government in a situation where any concessions would diminish its credentials regarding sovereignty.

outlook, represent the best security against the outbreak of war in South America. If the vicious circle of South American coups repeats itself, as it did after the so-called "Twilight of the Tyrants" in the 1950's, the risks of war will be greatly increased. Corporate or bureaucratic authoritarianism is no guarantee of rationality or better judgment, as the South Atlantic War demonstrated.

## B. OPTIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

### 1. South American Conflict and the U.S.

#### a. Significance to U.S. Interests

The impact of a war in South America on the United States is not immediately visible; the region is a long way from the attention of the North American public, and it is very unlikely that U.S. troops would be hazarded to intervene in or terminate such a conflict, much less be one of the original participants.

A more farsighted approach would consider the direct and indirect economic and security consequences of a war. In particular, the existing sizable debt burden of the South American countries makes it desirable to maintain stability in order to ensure our own and our allies' economic well-being. The degree of integration of the world economy at present would make it difficult for any war not to have a significant effect worldwide, especially if the war involved extrahemispheric actors.

Security problems resulting from a war in South America could include an opening for greatly increased Soviet penetration, and a further distancing from the West by one or by a number of nations--for example, Argentina and the U.S.S.R., which have already developed strong economic ties. This would significantly weaken the U.S. strategic position, in particular if vital sea lanes or raw materials were involved.

Diplomatic options are rather limited since U.S. leverage was eroded by the reductions in military training and diminished role as an arms supplier, and Washington lost much of its good faith as a mediator when it officially sided with Britain in the South Atlantic War. U.S. preponderance in the OAS remains a contentious issue, and few instruments that could replace the past effective U.S. leadership role in that organization exist.

b. U.S. Military Involvement

North American involvement in a South American conflict is not likely to go beyond the diplomatic stage unless some vital U.S. security interest is concerned. This could be the case in the event of a clearly Soviet-sponsored nation committing an unjustifiable aggression on a neighbor, a situation not very likely at the present time. Even then, U.S. aid would probably not go beyond providing arms or other assistance not involving U.S. troops.

Unilateral military options are rather limited and in any case could be counterproductive, especially if the issues of the conflict are not clear-cut. Nonetheless, a show of force with high-visibility assets such as the U.S. Navy would be a distinct possibility to ward off any Soviet intervention.

On the other hand, an all-too-possible scenario is the Non-Combatant Evacuation operation.<sup>174</sup> The United States Navy and Marine Corps, with the assistance of sister services, are currently capable of handling an operation of this type even against hostile local military forces, assuming domestic U.S. political support for such an operation could be obtained expeditiously; nevertheless, costs and casualties could be high.

However unfortunate the analogy, deployment of NEO forces would put the U.S. in the same situation as the

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<sup>174</sup> The Soviet Union carried out such an operation amidst heavy fighting in Aden in 1985.



Argentine junta and the British government in April of 1982: any military action would have to be quick, decisive, and successful. Such a scenario was possible in Grenada, where the U.S. and allied forces were overwhelming, local population support was ample, and the larger goals and missions were well-defined; in one of the South American nations, the specter of a Beirut or Viet Nam could too easily be raised. Timely and concerted multilateral action by U.S. forces as part of a widely accepted representative regional organization (if one existed),<sup>175</sup> could greatly facilitate all aspects of such an operation by enhancing the U.S. political position; of equal importance, it would also allow proximate basing and logistics support, as well as potential allied military assistance.

## 2. U.S. Policy for the Future

### a. Revitalizing Regional Organizations

Latin America in general and South America in particular were long considered a low-level U.S. policy interest, which could be deferred or managed while Washington focused on more pressing issues in Europe or Asia. Although a substantial portion of U.S. trade was with Latin America, relations were seen as part of the broader East-West struggle rather than as an independent arena. While the U.S. stressed the security side of the relationship, the South Americans strove to highlight the social and economic aspects; when Washington employed this latter perspective, it was principally through concern over security issues, as in the Alliance for Progress.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> The United Nations was unable to meet on a timely basis requirements for urgent action in the Sinai and in Beirut in 1980 and 1982 respectively. Frank Gregory, The Multinational Force--Aid or Obstacle to Conflict Resolution? (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1984), pages 17, 23, 35.

<sup>176</sup> Robert Wesson and Heraldo Munoz, eds., Latin American Views of U.S. Policy (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), page 8.

U.S. policy in the era since 1974 has been one of discovering the limits of North American power worldwide, but especially in the region that once seemed a U.S. preserve, the traditional "backyard." The Falklands/Malvinas conflict, with Argentina and then SELA repudiating the Inter-American Reciprocal Assistance Treaty (TIAR) as a viable interamerican organization, most recently brought this home. These defections from the existing interamerican system rendered the traditional role of the U.S. as chief player in the OAS virtually meaningless. U.S. actions in Central America and Grenada have shown that Washington is willing to act in certain scenarios--although once again these actions are very much East-West security driven and are subject to severe fluctuations created by U.S. domestic disagreement, and often to severe criticism from South America.

The Carter administration evaluated relations in accordance with human rights and arms purchase records; the Reagan administration has returned to a more pragmatic approach, while still applying diplomatic pressure to effect a maintenance of or transition to democracy. The new policy has fallen short of its goals in part because it has not been accompanied by a sizable credit outlay which might alleviate the crushing economic situation in South America that poses the greatest threat to regional stability.

Thus what is needed to help prevent conflict is a revamped policy which addresses itself to economic problems which threaten stability, without the ideological baggage of the doctrinaire East-West approach: a regional (vice global or even hemispheric) policy adapted to the special needs of South American development in a democratic context and not merely to short-term security requirements.<sup>177</sup> It would require recognition of the changes in the relative standing

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<sup>177</sup> Viron Vaky, "Political Change in Latin America: A Foreign Policy Dilemma for the United States," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, Volume 28 No. 2, Summer 1986, page 13.

of countries since World War II, and the reflection of these changes in reforms to existing instruments or creation of new ones.

While the U.S. still remains the most powerful nation in the hemisphere, some concessions would have to be made to the realities of the changed international order and the broadening of interamerican and extrahemispheric contacts in the last two decades. Although a revamped Good Neighbor Policy with assumptions of fictional equality is not called for, limitations in U.S. power, commitment and capability must be acknowledged; a cooperative approach, emphasizing partnership rather than subordination, has the best chances of success. The presence of the U.S. could act as a balance to help overcome South American reluctance to make alliances with unstable or potentially hostile neighbors, which has so far hindered efforts at cooperation.

The implementation of this policy could be handled by a body similar to the OAS, thereby providing the U.S. once again with an opportunity for leadership in an interamerican organization. Another example could be an increased and public U.S. role in resolving the problems of the South Atlantic War, with an eye to creation of a possible "South Atlantic Treaty Organization" similar to NATO.

What of the multilateral force concept, as employed in Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada? The development of a Regional Security Force equivalent in South America would entail a great deal of political as well as military risk; many South Americans would view it as another interventory tool of the United States. U.S. action would have to be in the context of a constabulary force, to avoid being cast as partisan.

These policy options are not without their difficulties; the governments of the South American nations may find it politically troublesome to restore the closeness of the ties they once shared with Washington unless they are

certain that U.S. policy will be consistent, and that the relationship will not be an excuse to restore U.S. "hegemony." The desirability of an entangling alliance with unstable countries is questionable for the U.S., especially with the present limitations on U.S. exercise of power; the alternative, however, of allowing a power vacuum in the region, is equally unpalatable. The regional approach is much harder to establish than bilateral arrangements, but the benefits which could accrue from presenting a hemispheric consensus are significantly greater than what most bilateral agreements could provide.

b) Arms Transfer Policy

Washington's arms transfer policies have also fluctuated significantly in the past two decades, from excessive paternalism to idealism to relative pragmatism. The competition in the arms market is here to stay, in large part due to the image of unreliability which policy flip-flops have created. The only possible advantage to be gained by allowing the South American nations to obtain their arms from an extrahemispheric supplier is that the weapons will be so much more expensive that the recipient will be unable to purchase enough or to use them effectively. The cost issue is diminishing with the arrival of Brazil as a serious contender in the arms manufacture and export business.

U.S. arms transfer policy must adapt to the new environment if Washington intends to retain some leverage in this area of relations. The greater threat to U.S. interests and causal agent for war is more likely internal instability, rather than armamentism. The major arms purchases have not been the sole contributing factor to the current economic chaos (Brazil, for example, despite its huge debt spent proportionately modest amounts on armament), although they have undeniably aggravated the situation in some cases, particularly Argentina and Peru. The nations that wanted "advanced" weapons systems were not seeking state-of-the-art



equipment, and frequently spent more than they would have, and received more advanced materiel, than if the U.S. had supplied them.

What is called for is not a policy of arming to the teeth every military in South America with U.S.-provided equipment; the current administration, though limited by aid cuts and lingering recipient animosity, could use a balanced policy of offering cheaper and less sophisticated products than the ones available on the extrahemispheric arms market. The current drawdown in the Defense budget thanks to the Deficit Reduction Act may provide a large amount of surplus materiel that if properly distributed would go a long way toward reaffirming South American armed forces' confidence in and ties with the U.S. military.<sup>178</sup>

#### c. Conclusions

In an era of severe foreign aid cutbacks, such policies may be the most viable given the long-term savings which could be realized. A path to regional integration and confidence-building measures would be opened which would significantly enhance internal stability and democracy. The policies would build up a reservoir of good will which could help to increase the reliability of South American allies in contributing to hemispheric security, while allowing the U.S. renewed diplomatic and military clout in the region. At the same time, they would allow the U.S. to compete more effectively against the Soviet Union in an arena where the Soviets are attempting to narrow a distinct strategic and economic disadvantage.

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<sup>178</sup> As regards internal stability, the "big-ticket," high-visibility weapons systems designed for external security are much less appropriate for use in coups than are counterinsurgency weapons.

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